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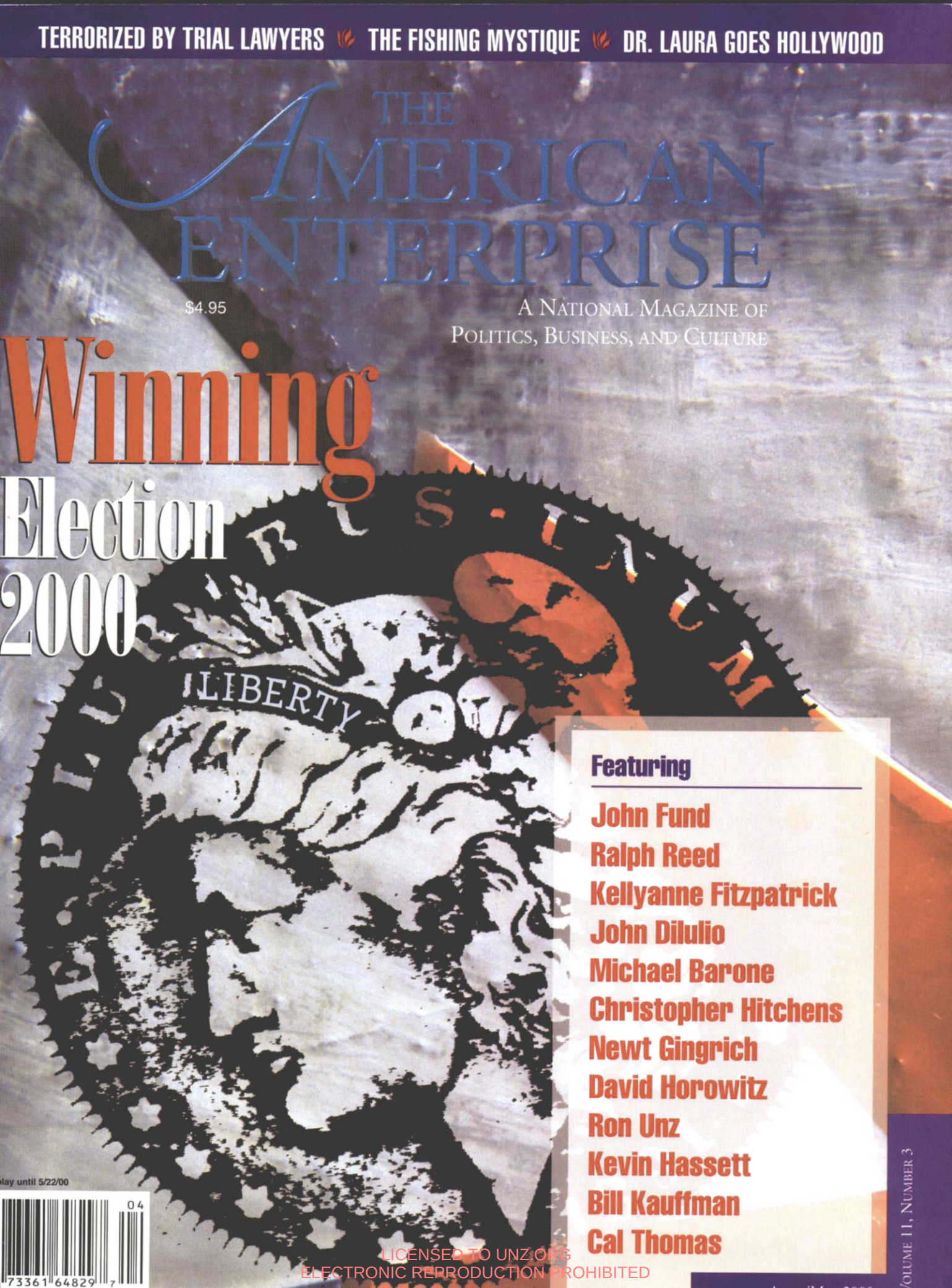
Winning Election 2000



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Ralph Reed
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Christopher Hitchens
Newt Gingrich
David Horowitz
Ron Unz
Kevin Hassett
Bill Kauffman
Cal Thomas

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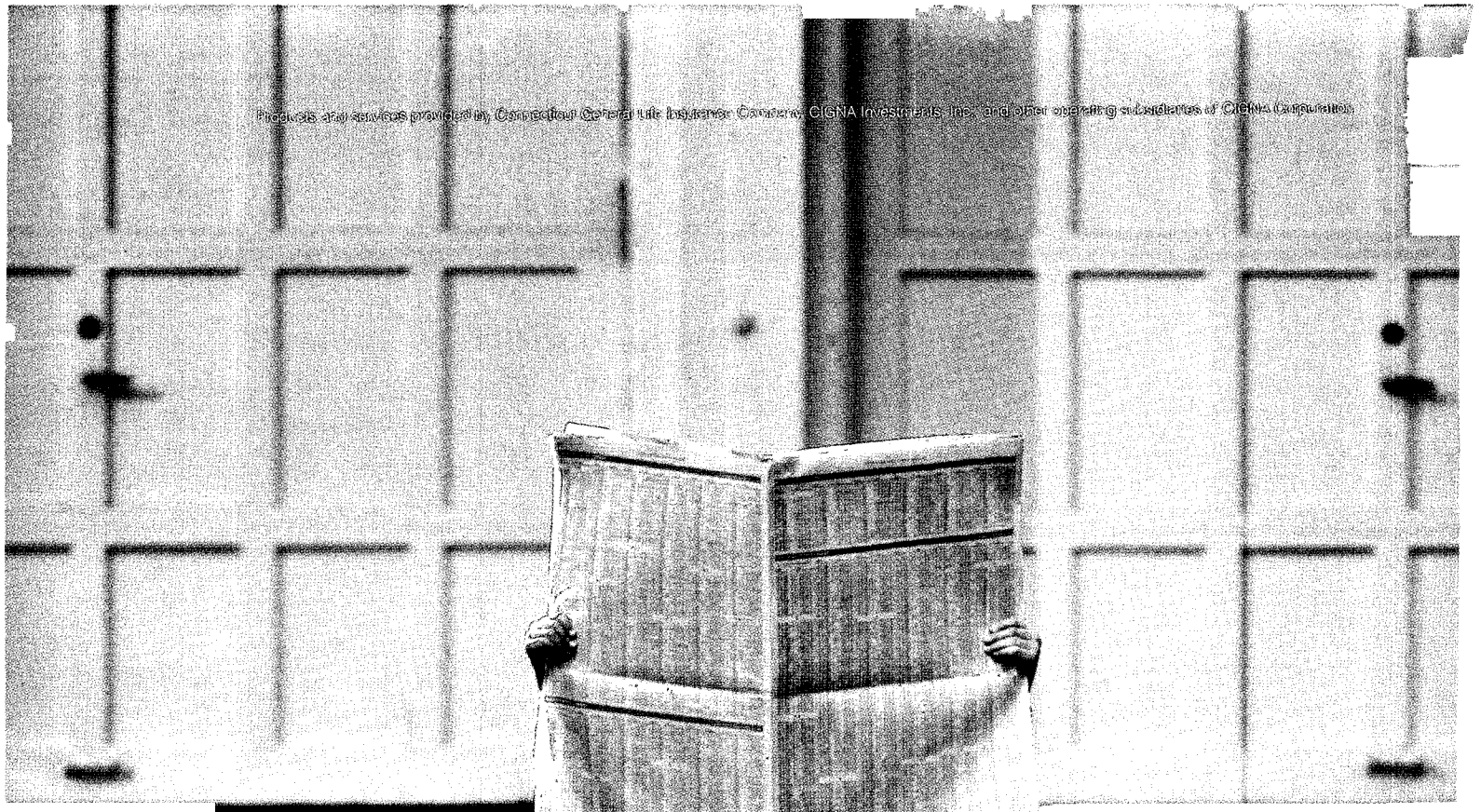

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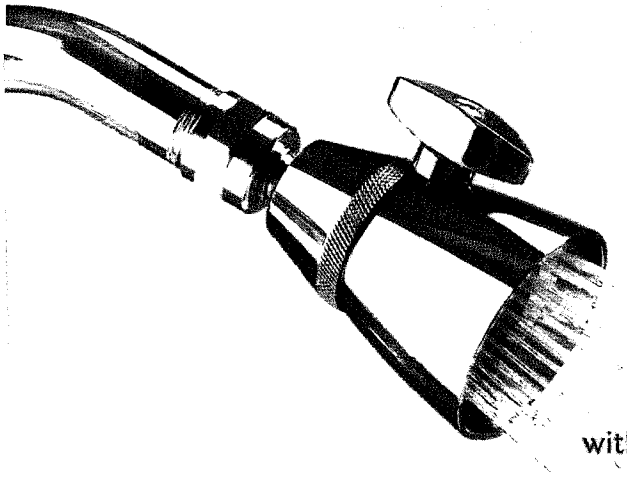

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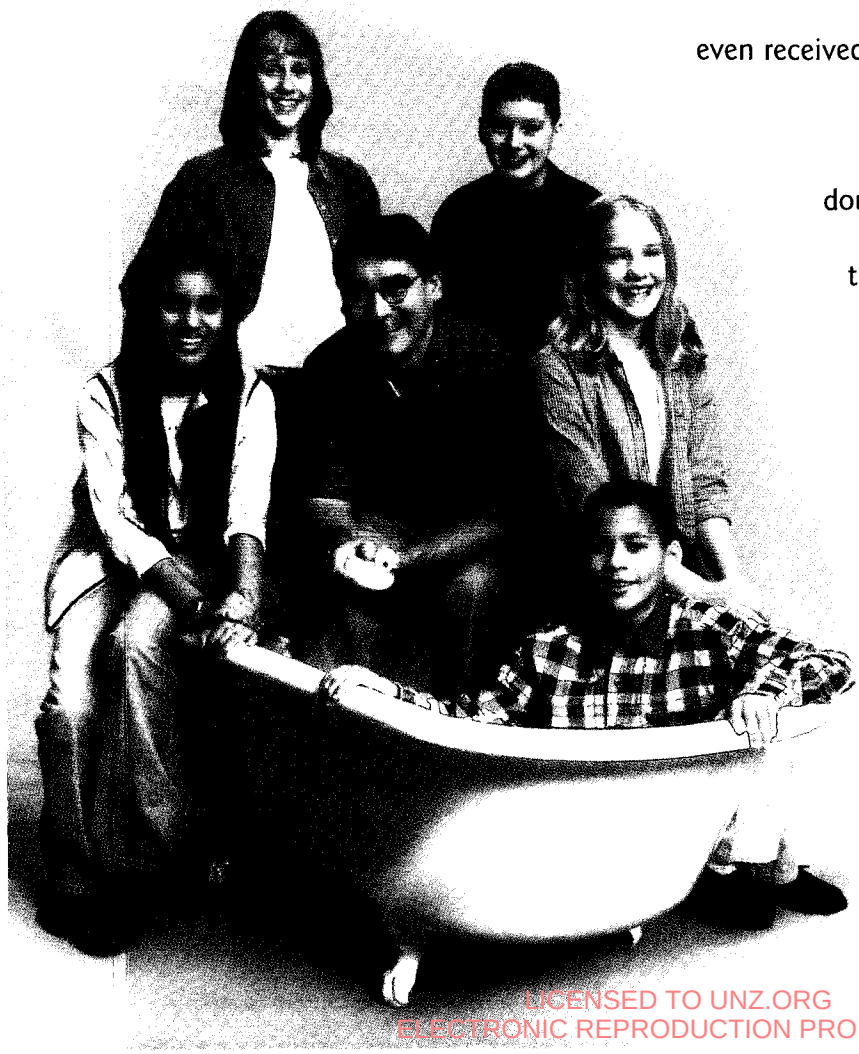

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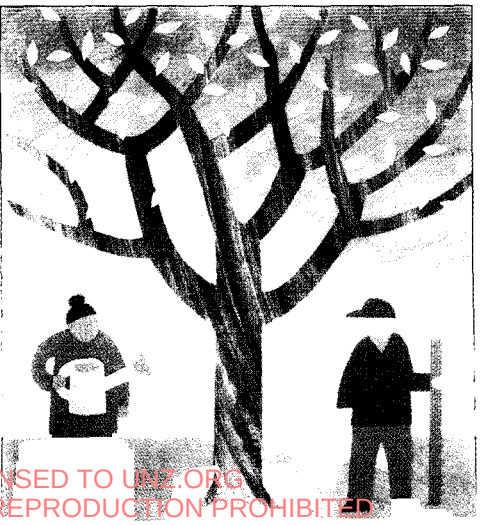

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THE AMERICAN ENTERPRISE

A NATIONAL MAGAZINE OF POLITICS, BUSINESS, AND CULTURE

APRIL/MAY 2000 VOL. 11, NO. 3

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POSTMASTER: Send all subscription correspondence and address changes to The American Enterprise, P.O. Box 7144, Bensenville, IL 60106-7144. THE AMERICAN ENTERPRISE (ISSN 1047-3572), published eight times per year by the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1150 17th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices. Copyright © 2000, the American Enterprise Institute. All rights reserved.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
"The Mail," The American Enterprise, 1150 17th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036, or fax (202) 862-5867, or e-mail TheAmericanEnterprise@compuserve.com.

WEB PAGE
www.TheAmericanEnterprise.org

PRODUCTION AND BUSINESS OFFICE
The American Enterprise
1150 17th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.
(202) 862-5886.

OFFICE OF THE EDITOR IN CHIEF
The American Enterprise
23 Hurd Street, Cazenovia, N.Y. 13035.
(315) 655-1033.

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Bird's Eye

KARL ZINSMEISTER

Three P's in a Political Pod

Politics has three elements: personalities, principles, and process. On the personalities front, America is currently in the midst of an unusually lively and healthy election season. Whatever else may be said of today's stable of presidential racers, none of them are lacking in vigor or skill. Compared to some of the snoozy, dwarfish contests of the recent past, we're witnessing strong prizefights right now. And in politics as elsewhere, stiff competition is the best way to separate the worthy from the not.

Voter turnout has rocketed up this year, and much of the public interest has centered on the personal character of candidates. This is a predictable response to Clintonism and other late warnings of moral rot. Having long been told by media smarty-pants that mature voters should look at "policies" and not "personal life," Americans seem to be discovering that, actually, personal life is pretty darn important.

As former White House speechwriter Peggy Noonan has written, "In a President, character is everything. A President doesn't have to be brilliant.... He doesn't have to be clever; you can hire clever.... But you can't buy courage and decency; you can't rent a strong moral sense. A President must bring those things with him."

It was actually Noonan's boss who re-established the primacy of character as a presidential essential. "Ronald Reagan represented the end of the rule of the planners, the eggheads, the technocrats who believed that the North Vietnamese could be beaten if we ran enough punchcards through the Pentagon computers," notes columnist James Lileks. "He didn't win because he was smarter than Carter. He won because he was manlier."

Reagan wasn't just a moral force, however. His emphasis on character and virtue was combined with dogged devotion to some big, hard, very specific ideas and principles. Reagan was certain communism was evil and unworkable and would be dangerous until wrestled to the ground by free men; ignoring elite mockery, he went for the pin. Reagan wanted a beefed up navy and a missile defense shield; he refused to take no for an answer. Reagan viewed government regulations as frequently counterproductive; the page count of new rules shrank dramatically on his watch. Reagan believed top tax rates shouldn't exceed 30 percent; he dragged them down.

None of the current frontrunners have aspirations as concrete and focused as these. One can tell McCain, Bush, Gore, and company badly want to be President; but they give little evidence of specific things they're aching to *do* once in office.

If you're devoted to ideas and principles, it's hard not to be disappointed in contemporary politicians, with their reflexive preference for soft platitudes over hard proposals. John DiIulio, Michael Barone, and Christopher Hitchens (who occupy rather different parts of the political rainforest) all agree later in these pages that "there are no substantive issues in this year's election." This illustrates a kind of 3D consensus of dismay with modern, focus-group, forget-principle-just-feel-their-pain campaigning.

On the one hand, conservatives shouldn't be overly perturbed to see a politics grow up that is more supervisory and tinkering than boldly activist. In keeping with our general interest in seeing the state wither away, leaving societal problem-solving to other, less Jurassic institutions instead, the disappearance of 12-point political crusades shouldn't be a matter of wrenching sadness.

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On the other hand, we do have serious problems—like dreadful urban public schools, and a Social Security system headed for bankruptcy in half a generation—that can't be fixed without government action (even if the ideal action is simply to back the state out of the picture). So it can be painful to watch today's pusillanimity and paralysis on the Potomac. Particularly frustrating is the slavishly poll-based style of "leadership" that Bill Clinton has developed to a high art.

Keep in mind, most Americans neither know nor care much about politics. Having never lived under a truly dysfunctional system of government, they take politics for granted, focusing instead on other things like children, faith, jobs, and "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?". In the January 2000 Gallup poll, only one out of 20 Americans could identify the Speaker of the House. (Eleven times as many knew game show host Regis Philbin.) In this environment, it's crazy to cower before public opinion. Leaders have to *create* support on tough political questions, not wait on it.

Through his stubborn (to critics, stupid) devotion to a handful of bedrock political ideas, Reagan pulled the country into new agreement on topics that many people previously didn't even know mattered. Reagan's broken-record tutorings on small government, individual freedom, and moral virtue—made possible by his inner confidence, and his lack of care for the disapproval of fashionable elites—allowed him to manufacture a consensus rather than just follow it.

Some political commentators are saying the winds have shifted against any recurrence of this triumph. "The conservative movement, which accomplished great things over the past quarter century, is finished," wrote Bill Kristol recently in the *Washington Post*.

I don't see that at all. On topics like abortion, race preferences, missile defense, taxes, and crime, there's not a dime's worth of difference between the positions taken by Ronald Reagan and the positions taken by today's Republicans George W. Bush and John McCain. And on front-and-center topics like education reform, Social Security, fixes for Medicare, and the role of religion in solving social problems, both Bush and McCain are now positioned *to the right* of the strongest positions Reagan ever took. Reagan never dared breathe a word of support for partial privatization of Social Security, education vouchers, federal funding for religious charities, or market-based cashouts of Medicare. Public receptivity to these conservative mega-reforms was simply not yet ripe. Today, the nation's thinking has evolved to the point where those sorts of proposals are Bush and McCain standbys. If having its reforms become mundanely mainstream means the conservative movement is finished, well, we're all for that.

Along with personalities and ideas, the third important element in politics is the political process itself. John McCain is just the latest candidate to make hay on the idea that our current system is broken and in need of fixing.

Certainly there are things that want correction. In his troubling article on page 42, *TAE* senior editor Scott Walter sketches one electoral corruption in drastic need of repair. (Interestingly, George W. Bush has been much braver on the problem in question than John McCain, while Al Gore is an actively harmful force.) And a rather rotten reason explains why this particular rip in our democracy has gone as far as it has: The beneficiaries of the scam are lawyers (who make up more than four out of ten members of Congress).

SPENDING A THIRD OF WHAT WE SHELL OUT ANNUALLY FOR POTATO CHIPS IN ORDER TO SELECT OUR NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES IS SOME KIND OF SCANDAL? I DON'T THINK SO.

Shortly after it was reported a couple years ago that attorneys are something like 12 times as prevalent in Washington as in the rest of country, a joke went around about how the National Institutes of Health were starting to use lawyers instead of white rats in their lab experiments. For three reasons: Because there are more lawyers than white rats. Because there are some things even rats won't do. And because scientists sometimes grow attached to the rats.

Tapping into America's distinctly rodentish view of Washington generally, John McCain has been declaiming loudly against "money in politics." This part of his message, unfortunately, is just showboating. Total spending on *all* campaigns for federal office by *all* candidates (major and minor)—including independent expenditures by unions and trade groups, all party payouts, all convention costs, etc.—came to $1.5 billion the last time we elected both a Congress and a President (1996). Meanwhile, that same year, Americans spent $2.0 billion on chewing gum, $21.5 billion on other kinds of candy, $2.7 billion on bowling fees, $27.8 billion on cigarettes, $13.9 billion on movies, $4.6 billion on potato chips, $12.8 billion on athletic shoes, $91.7 billion for alcoholic beverages, and $3.5 billion on coin-operated pinball and video games. We are a high-income nation of 273 million people. Spending a third of what we shell out annually for potato chips in order to sort and select our national representatives is some kind of scandal? I don't think so.

Nor are horrible fatcats buying elections. George W. Bush collected his current war chest from 173,000 different donors giving an average of $335 each. That sounds to me like democracy, not corruption.

In an era when Washington is increasingly dictating how Americans can use their land, educate their children, run their businesses, and so forth, it's ridiculous to complain about people giving reasonable sums to candidates who represent their interests. This is legitimate political action, and quite unavoidable unless you're going to muzzle free expression. If John McCain, Russ Feingold, and other alarmists on this subject really want to get money out of our politics, they should first get politicians out of our money. Until the feds stop interfering in so many aspects of our economy and community life, energetic defensive efforts to influence D.C. decisionmaking will be inevitable.

That's the kind of chicken-versus-egg reality that no one expects a liberal Democrat (who would be unwilling to shrink government's reach in any case) to understand. But we expect better of "conservative-to-midstream Republicans."

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Sidelights

The American Federation of Government Employees has 17,000 more members than it did before Vice President **Al Gore** began his "reinventing government" crusade, observes columnist **Paul Gigot.** · · · Another government employees' union, the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, has recently suffered from revelations of crooked practices by 35 of its officials. The group's general counsel assured the *New York Times* it is "cleaner than most unions." · · · The Bureau of Labor Statistics says 37 percent of government workers are unionized, as opposed to 9 percent of private-sector workers. ❦ The Project for the New American Century warns that the **Clinton** administration has deferred weapons spending at the Pentagon to the tune of nearly $1 trillion, compared to the final **Bush** administration plan. · · · In 1999 the Air Force fell short of its recruiting goals for the first time in 20 years. · · · "On the day when America Online's merger with Time Warner was announced," observes columnist **David Ignatius,** "the entire defense sector was worth just one-fourth the [market] value of this single media giant." ❦ Suffering from sex discrimination lawsuits, the New York City Fire Department aggressively recruited women to join, and provided a training program for the difficult physical test. Half the women who applied dropped out before the written exam. Two-thirds of the women who passed did not even attempt the physical test. Of those taking the physical exam—which included exercises such as raising ladders and feeding hose—92 percent failed. ❦ UCLA's annual survey of college freshmen found only 18 percent had checked a book or periodical out of the library in the past year. · · · Asked to explain why TV game shows have taken to asking ridiculously easy questions, the host of "Win **Ben Stein**'s Money" replied, "People are dumber." · · · Yale psychology professor **Marianne LaFrance** spent three months conducting interviews and experiments to produce a report on "The Psychological, Interpersonal, and Social Effects of Bad Hair." · · · The *Chronicle of Higher Education* reports that Williams College will freeze its comprehensive cost for tuition, fees, and room and board at $31,520—the first time a "selective private" college has failed to raise prices in the past quarter-century.

In 1999, almost 19 percent of U.S. employees were eligible for stock options, up from 12 percent the year before, according to Watson Wyatt Worldwide. · · · The average price for new homes today, the Commerce Department says, is $200,000. · · · From 1989-98, the proportion of families owning stock rose from 32 percent to 49 percent, a Federal Reserve study found. ❦ **Bill Clinton** appointed more millionaires to Cabinet posts than any other President. Now he and **Hillary** have purchased a home in Chappaqua, New York, where annual household income averages $228,000. · · · Liberal pundit **Mickey Kaus** notes that Mrs. Clinton's likely opponent for New York's senate seat, Mayor **Rudolph Giuliani,** opposed the 1996 welfare reform bill and "whined like a congressional Democrat about the bill's 'lack of sufficient funding for day care.'" ❦ "If there were any real penalties for trying to predict New Hampshire [primaries], there'd be an awful lot of journalists living in cardboard boxes over steam vents," admits NBC anchorman **Tom Brokaw.** · · · The first sentence of the Vice President's online campaign biography reads, "Al Gore served in the U.S. Army in Vietnam." · · · The Reform Party is "in revolt against the politicians, who bicker and get nothing done. And what have they created? A party that bickers even more and accomplishes even less," observes pundit **Ramesh Ponnuru.** ❦ "We think we can be the McDonald's of sperm," a Danish sperm bank executive told the *Wall Street Journal.* He added that "the nation's high concentration of blond, blue-eyed donors could even make branding possible" in the global marketplace. · · · Sex-toy parties—a variation on the Tupperware parties of old—are catching on among American women. One marketer alone has 400 distributors in 25 states and Canada. · · · The law firm Jackson Lewis polled over 1,000 personnel executives at firms that instituted "dress down" days; 30 percent reported a rise in "flirtatious behavior." · · · Liposuction death rates are 20 to 60 times higher than rates for all operations in hospitals, reports *USA Today.* ❦ The London *Times* observes that the decline of Latin classes in Britain is being reversed, thanks to Internet teaching. New Latin terms include *connexus* for "online" and *emissio electronica* for "e-mail." ❦ Ireland's efforts to keep its greenhouse-gas emissions within Kyoto Protocol limits are being seriously threatened by the quantity of flatulence its cows are producing. —*SW*

"The credit card company wants to know what kind of month they can expect."

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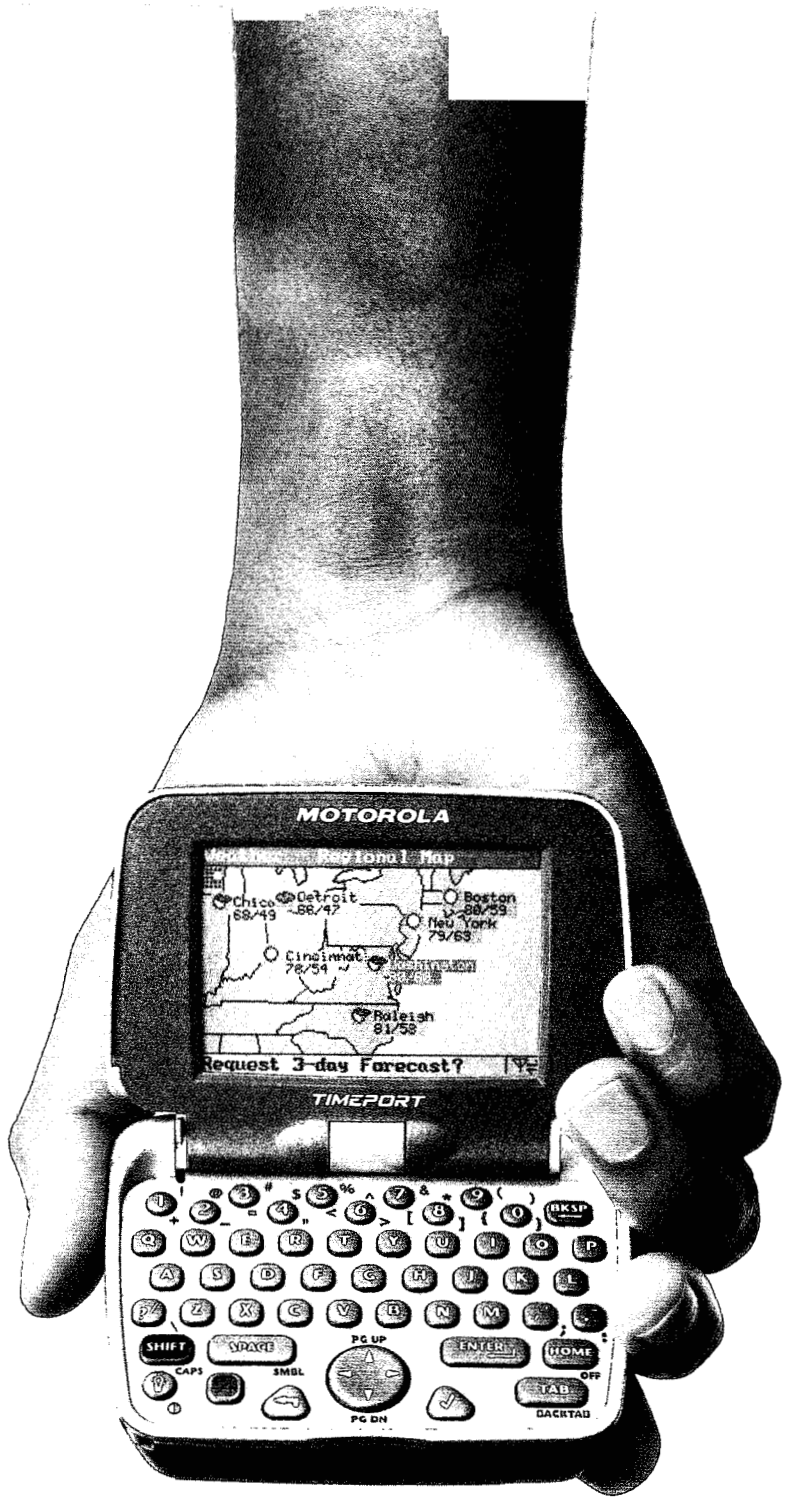

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SCAN

PAY FOR GAY PLAY

A few weeks ago two students representing the Governor's Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth came before the Massachusetts Board of Education asking the Board to enhance regulations designed to protect homosexual students from harassment in school. The students expressed concern that despite available funding, many schools in the state have yet to form so-called Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs). Believing that these support groups are the best method for fighting intolerance, the representatives asked the board to investigate the dearth of such organizations. Before the Board of Education creates more GSAs, however, and before the Massachusetts legislature renews the funding of support organizations in and out of schools, it would be worth learning what the groups are doing with their current resources.

Consider, for instance, the Boston Alliance of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered Youth (BAGLY), an organization closely allied with the GSAs. BAGLY, which receives funding from the Massachusetts Departments of Health and Education and the Governor's Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth, sponsored a free three-day lakeside retreat in New Hampshire for "boys" up to the age of 25. The Young Men's Health Project, as the weekend getaway is called, has no lower age limit, though BAGLY executive director Grace Sterling Stowell claims they usually don't see anyone at their meetings younger than 14. While the organizations that sponsored the event strictly forbid sexual contact between program leaders and participants, they do not have any formal rules about contact between the older participants and the younger ones. When asked by the *Massachusetts News* about the possibility of sexual activity between a 22-year-old and a 14-year-old, Sterling Stowell only responds, "We would be concerned if that were happening."

As if the circumstances of this getaway were not peculiar enough, Gay –Straight Alliances around the state distributed a pamphlet to members which described the topics to be discussed during the weekend—dating, safe sex, harassment at school—and also offered a $25 stipend, free meals, and free subway tokens to students who attended. "We figured, hey, you get some pizza, you get a stipend, and in the course of it you get some accurate information about HIV," explains Sterling Stowell. A less favorable view might be that BAGLY is engaged in bribing young boys to go away for weekends with strange men, some of whom may be as much as ten years older than they are. Still, Stowell claims that "the safety of our youth is our highest priority."

Groups like BAGLY have convinced various Massachusetts officials such retreats are needed to provide a support network for persecuted homosexual students. Moreover, they claim that the state's homosexual students are engaged in more dangerous types of behavior than their heterosexual counterparts, (e.g. drug use, suicide attempts, etc.) and therefore need special protection. That homosexuality is so closely correlated with risky behavior has led many to question the advisability of encouraging it. The answer provided by BAGLY and its allies is that these youths are gay by nature not nurture.

But one of the very statistics which BAGLY supplies casts doubt on the credibility of this claim. In the course of the students' testimony before the Board of Education, it was revealed that, compared to their heterosexual peers, almost three times as many gay, lesbian, and bisexual students in Massachusetts have either been pregnant or impregnated someone. This seems a bit counterintuitive, but it's not. It implies that these adolescents whose orientation is supposed to be predetermined are often just confused about sex and have been experimenting widely. If these statistics are anything to go by, the kids are certainly open to a heterosexual lifestyle.

—**Naomi Schaefer** *is an assistant editor at* Commentary.

SEPARATE BUT EQUAL

A national poll co-commissioned by the NAACP finds that 50 percent of 18- to 29-year-old Americans now agree with the statement, "It's O.K. if the races are basically separate from one another as long as everyone has equal opportunities."

THE INDIVIDUAL PATH TO GROUP SUCCESS

Racial quotas are counterproductive not just because they undermine the foundations of equality before the law, but also for the practical reason that they shield black Americans from vital lessons of cause and effect, thereby depriving them of an understanding of the way progress is achieved.

Traditionally, Americans learned the penalties for doing poorly and the rewards for doing well. Today, poor black children see the affluence of the "white"

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world, but are rarely told about the struggle, the sacrifice, and the determination that preceded the achievement.

Much unhappiness among black Americans emanates from mistaken perceptions as to when and how white Americans became affluent. The fact is, most people on this planet have had a difficult life. The settlers of America were not offered air-conditioned homes with full refrigerators and gassed-up automobiles. The pilgrims, the pioneers, and the homesteaders paid their dues. So did the builders of industry, the Depression generation, and the waves upon waves of immigrants.

Today millions in Eastern Europe would gladly swap economic conditions with the "dispossessed" of America's inner cities, because opportunity in America remains just around the corner; effort is almost certain to be rewarded. We must not relinquish that blessing.

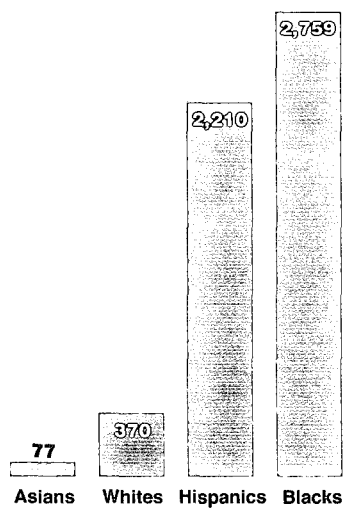
No amount of affirmative action can do a fraction of the good that would result from a new emphasis on hard work and high aspirations. It would be most encouraging to hear praise lavished by black speakers on ambitious, high-achieving black Americans today, rather than listening to the achievers' being condemned as "Uncle Toms" and "Oreos." Much of the black leadership continues to emphasize a separate black America, and to define it in terms of its least successful layer. It would be better to portray black America in terms of its successes, which in many cases are extraordinary.

Successful black Americans represent the ultimate confirmation of America's ability to unlock humanity's potential. They demonstrate that there is life outside the group, that equal standing before the law is all one really needs.

Group rights—the erosion of individual rights—began with black group rights. If we hope to reverse the malignancy of privilege, declining standards, and the rise of an unproductive underclass, all Americans will have to realize that individual rights offer the only long-term guarantee for the pursuit of happiness.

—**Balint Vasonyi**, *a Hungarian-born historian and concert pianist, is the author of* America's Thirty Years War.

Additional murders that would have occurred in New York City absent Giuliani-era crime reductions



(1993 rates extrapolated through 1999 by *New York Post* and editors)

HELPING CRIMINALS, HURTING CITIZENS

Gun control advocates are pushing a growing number of minor restrictions, such as trigger locks and "safe storage" laws, which would require that all firearms be locked up when not in use. Presidential hopefuls McCain, Bradley, and Gore all support safe storage legislation. Surely no one could reasonably oppose such common sense measures.

Or could they? At a recent American Enterprise Institute conference, Yale law professor John Lott presented a new study, co-written by John Whitley of the University of Chicago, that flies in the face of conventional wisdom. Based on data from 15 states that have had safe storage laws in effect for at least five years, their results illustrate how a provision designed to help people can have the opposite effect.

Though safe storage legislation is supposed to prevent accidental shootings, states that passed these laws saw no significant drop in accidental gun deaths compared to states that did not pass them. (People who are careless with loaded weapons appear just as careless about heeding safety laws.)

So what? an anti-gunner may argue; the laws aren't doing any harm. Wrong: Such laws make defensive weapons unavailable to homeowners in emergencies, where gun ownership has a documented record of deterring crime. Polls of imprisoned felons show that criminals' greatest fear is encountering an armed victim.

Most burglars, for instance, avoid late-night break-ins in the U.S. because "that's the way to get shot." As a result, the rate of "hot burglaries"—occurring when a resident is home—is much lower in the well-armed United States (13 percent) than in nations with strict gun control like Britain or Canada (where such dangerous intrusions account for nearly half of all burglaries).

The gun locks that President Clinton wants every gun equipped with usually require the firearm be unloaded first. So a potential victim can't defend himself without first removing any locks or safety devices and then inserting ammunition. Under stress that can be a slow and difficult process—and crooks know it.

Criminals in the 15 states Professor Lott studied took advantage of the lessened threat of armed resistance from homeowners. In the first five years after safe storage laws were adopted, these states saw an average annual addition of more than 300 extra murders, 3,860 more rapes, 24,650 additional robberies, and over 25,000 more aggravated assaults.

The cost to victims? A yearly total of $2.6 billion in medical and property expenses, other out-of-pocket expenses, and lostproductivity. And then there are the non-monetary costs—like death, and emotional devastation.

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AFFLUENCE BUYS GOVERNMENT SPRAWL

The American era of big government began with Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, each with his own forthright, popularly compelling vision of active government hitched to a common national purpose. It continued with Franklin Roosevelt, who had a big problem on his hands and popular support to try almost anything to fix it. But much of government today has no theme or theory, just momentum. It is government sprawl, strip-mall socialism—ubiquitous, undistinguished, strictly utilitarian in the service of innumerable small middle-class wants and gripes. Bill Clinton did not invent the technique of government accretion by tiny meliorative increment; he learned it from the world he inhabits; the government invented it itself.

In 1947, government outlays (federal, state, and local) were 21 percent of gross domestic product; in 1999 they were 31 percent. Taking into account the growth of regulation not captured by these statistics (because regulatory expenditures are made largely within the private sector), government has grown more than 50 percent faster than the economy as a whole and now claims more than one-third of America's economic resources. The federal government owns one-third of the American landmass, pays for 40 percent of medical care, manages nearly 50 percent of personal retirement savings, and regulates many major industries.

We find ourselves with an activist government that plays a larger and more immediate role in our lives than ever before. There is good cause for worry that government is mastering the techniques of efficiency and growth as well as the private sector, and that the super-affluent society is one where the architecture of limited government is at risk.

—From the AEI Boyer Lecture delivered by **Christopher DeMuth**, *February 15.*

THE TRUE IVY LEAGUE MINORITY

The Newhouse News Service recently printed a story by reporter Jonathan Tilove which found that, statistically speaking, the most serious "diversity" problem at elite universities today is "the underrepresentation of the white, non-Jewish majority, especially such white ethnics as Italian Americans and such religious groups as Southern Baptists and other evangelicals."

Though they make up 70 percent of the U.S. population, non-Jewish whites composed just 40 percent of the enrollment at Harvard, for instance. "That means that Christian whites are far more underrepresented at Harvard, relative to their numbers in the general population, than even blacks and Hispanics," Tilove reports.

"If diversity is what [elite colleges] want," he writes, "they ought to be searching out more Christian conservatives, even though that is probably not exactly the target population those who talk the most about diversity have in mind."

When reporter Tilove presented these findings to Harvard admissions director Marlyn McGrath Lewis, she responded that it is a "foolish notion" to filter college admissions by group representation. Affirmative action defender Stephen Steinberg of Queens College similarly complained that if attention is paid to the underrepresentation of white ethnics and evangelicals, "the whole thing begins to look like pork barrel."

Precisely.

RELIGION ON CAMPUS—NOT

From the Smith Alumnae Quarterly*:*

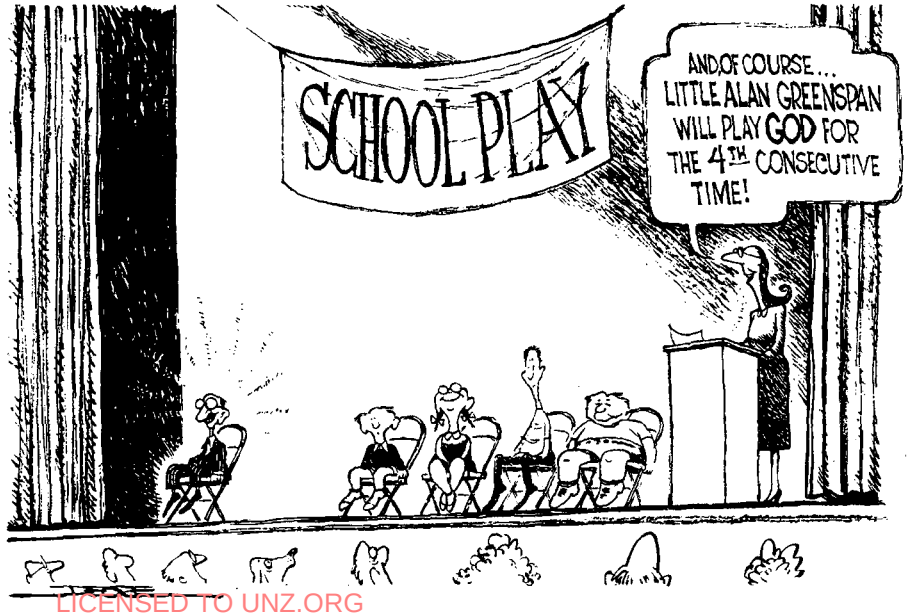
"I think the academic suspicion of religion is very deep, and there's a tremendous amount of ignorance on college campuses," says Jewish and women's studies scholar Judith Plaskow. "People who are very sophisticated in every other area of their lives are still walking around with their fifth-grade understanding of God and religion…."

"I once heard someone say it's harder to come out as a spiritual person than as a lesbian here at Smith," says religion major Katherine Delse…. Delse also notes the uneasy relationship between the study of religion and the practice of religion on campus. "My religion professor always talks about people who find religion or go on religious quests as Other, as if no one in the room has had any of these experiences…."

In the early part of the century, chapel [at Smith] was mandatory—100 percent participation. In the class of '96 senior survey…59 percent of students responded that they did not participate in religious services at all. Only 9 percent participated frequently and 32 percent participated occasionally.

COOL DOWN ABOUT WARMING

Environmentalists argue global warming is a looming catastrophe and can only be stopped with massive expenditures. In his recent study *The Greening of Global Warming*, Robert Mendelson of the Yale School of Forestry argues that advanced techniques of analysis show global climate change will be more gradual and less



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damaging than earlier models foresaw. Discussing his research at an American Enterprise Institute symposium, Mendelson contended that newer models of climate change possess three improvements: They are better able to show how oceans interact with the atmosphere; they show that some pollutants, particularly sulfates, actually cool the atmosphere rather than heat it; and they are more refined in assessing how climate change will affect the world economy. For example, some of the first models predicted massive losses of recreation-derived jobs based solely on the shortening of the skiing season. Newer models, taking into account that people also hike, camp, and fish in ski areas, predict no net loss of recreation jobs.

Older models predicted the average global temperature would increase by six to 13 degrees Fahrenheit by 2050. Newer models, such as those issued by the International Panel on Climate Change in 1996, foresee a more moderate change of two to seven degrees Fahrenheit by 2100. This will benefit many cooler parts of the world. Longer growing seasons and higher concentrations of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere will mean more bountiful harvests of many crops.

Based on the average of about a dozen models, Mendelson calculates global warming should increase the U.S. economy by 0.2 percent of the gross domestic product by 2100. That's substantially different from the 1 to 2 percent decline predicted by earlier models.

The news from climate change models, Mendelson notes, is mixed. Tropical countries will be in for a hard time as the world gets hotter. And the richer countries will have to take steps to protect their coasts against gradual sea encroachments.

But the spending that needs to be done to fight climate change should be done gradually, Mendelson insists. We oughtn't spend huge sums now to curtail greenhouse emissions; instead, smaller amounts should be deployed more efficiently over the long term. "What we do in the next decade," he says, "by and large doesn't matter. It's what we do in the next *century* that matters."

IT'S THEIR BABY

A posting we came across recently on an Internet bulletin board for architects, from Jerry Schwinghammer of Orlando, Florida:

I know a woman who drives a huge $40,000 SUV. She drives 50 miles each way to work at a job that pays about $1.00 more an hour than a local job—same responsibilities.

She told me recently about how she wishes she could spend more time with her son. She also told me about how she literally cried when her son climbed on her vehicle and put scratches on the hood.

I suggested that she take the local job, dump the SUV, and spend more time with her kid, and that she'd come out financially ahead to boot. She thought I was insane. She loved that car, and her husband did too. It was worth it.

They are both college educated. I think the reasoning is some sort of desire for a trophy that says to the world, "I made it, look at me."

(T)RUTHLESS AL GORE

At least Bill and Hillary Clinton had good reason to lie—the truth could have landed them behind bars. How can you come clean about Chinese money drops or the 10,000 percent return in the Miracle of the Cattle Futures?

With Al Gore, it's different. The lying is less purposeful, more manic. As in Gore's pathetic claim that he and Tipper were the inspiration for *Love Story*, or his ridiculous assertion to have fathered the Internet.

Gore has similarly alleged he invented the earned-income tax credit: "I was the author of that proposal." In reality, it became law a year before he entered Congress.

Then there's Gore's contention that he co-sponsored the original McCain-Feingold campaign finance bill. In fact, Feingold was not elected to the Senate until Gore had already left to become Vice President. Gore also claims he inspired Vice President Hubert Humphrey's 1968 speech at the Democratic Convention, passing his ideas on through speech writer Charles Bartlett. Actually, Bartlett says he didn't write the speech or have any link with Humphrey in 1968.

This January Gore told school kids in New Hampshire he "found a little place in upstate New York called Love Canal," then "had the first hearing on the issue." The truth: Gore's hearing was held two months after President Jimmy Carter declared the area a national disaster.

In another New Hampshire meeting, Gore claimed to have a straight pro-choice record on abortion. "I have," he declared, "always supported a woman's right to choose." Not quite. In 1979, Gore voted against federal funding for abortions in cases of incest and rape. The *Nashville Banner* quoted Gore on September 14, 1984: "I am opposed to abortion, and I've consistently voted against any federal funding." 1987: "Abortion is arguably the taking of a human life." During his eight years in the House, Gore racked up an 84 percent pro-life voting record, changing his position only when it became politically useful, and then hiding that fact.

The FBI investigation into illegal Clinton-Gore fundraising during the 1996 campaign documents Gore saying 23 times that he couldn't recall anything illegal being discussed during the White House meeting that set up an illegal phone calling system. The excuse? "He drank a lot of iced tea during meetings," reports the FBI, "which could have necessitated a restroom break." Alas, the handwritten notes of the meeting quote Gore: "VP: 'Count me in on the calls.'"

On economics, Gore asserts the current administration "ended the deepest recession since the 1930s." In fact, the 1990-91 economic dip lasted only two quarters, making it one of the mildest dips since World War II. Moreover, the official dater of recessions—the National Bureau of Economic Research—identifies our current boom as beginning in April 1991—some 20 months before Clinton and Gore entered the White House. (More fundamentally, today's turnaround traces back to early '80s reforms.)

When Gore's truthlessness combines with his political ambition, the results can be ugly, as shown by a story retired Senator Alan Simpson (R-Wyo.) recently told journalist Chris Matthews. As the Senate was about to vote on whether to support President Bush's Gulf war on Saddam Hussein, Gore approached

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Simpson and Minority Leader Bob Dole in the cloakroom. "How much time will you give me," asked Gore, "if I support the President?" Dole offered 15 minutes (twice the Democrats' offer), maybe 20. When it later looked like Gore might receive only 15 minutes of camera time, he threatened to switch his vote. The debate had to be lengthened, Simpson notes, so the senator with his verities for sale could enjoy a full measure of limelight.

—**Ralph Reiland** *is a* TAE *contributing writer.*

ABC: ALWAYS BACK CLINTON-GORE?

Last year veteran ABC reporter Bob Zelnick wrote a biography critical of Al Gore, and he was fired from the network. This year, ABC legal correspondent Jeffrey Toobin wrote a book on impeachment that defended Bill Clinton, and nothing happened.

This despite the fact that the *New York Times* declared Zelnick's book "a useful and comprehensive survey of the highs and lows of Gore's political career," while calling Toobin's tome "highly partisan" and "willfully subjective."

We expect to see Mr. Toobin on ABC News for years to come.

THE VAST LEFT-WING CONSPIRACY

As Hillary Clinton runs for the Senate in New York, polls consistently show the First Lady trailing Republican opponent Rudolph Giuliani among white women. Even thoroughly liberal females are grumbling, as indicated by these harsh responses collected by the left-wing *New York Observer*:

"For some reason I feel she's unethical."
—Brooke Hayward Duchin, author

"Every sort of statement she makes... is designed for her own political advancement...I don't fully trust her...she's done this crazy 180."
—Alexandra Brodsky, filmmaker

"She's a poll-taker, she's a pulse-taker, she's not a leader."
—Fran Lebowitz, comedienne

"unattractive, narcissistic tendencies... I'm ashamed of her...she believes she cannot be wrong and knows all the answers."
—Dr. Patricia Allen, ob-gyn

McCAIN: PRINCIPLE OR AMBITION?

At John McCain's fête on the night of the South Carolina primary, McCain spokesman Todd Harris told me what the entire McCain campaign has been telling the national press corps for months: "Our campaign had wide appeal and reached out to conservatives and moderates alike."

If inclusiveness is the underlying ethic of the McCain campaign—what melds Republicans, Democrats, libertarians, and vegetarians, as McCain likes to say—then what is the nature of that inclusiveness? Is it making room for different groups of voters who have come to share beliefs with a conservative candidate? Or is it a conservative candidate attenuating his conservatism to make room for different groups of voters?

It's impossible to say for certain whether McCain is trying to communicate a conservative message to communities traditionally hostile to conservatism (*à la* Ronald Reagan), or is a moderate running on a most-things-to-most-people platform (*à la* Al Gore), or is a political con man who's motivated by personal ambition rather than principle (*à la* Bill Clinton). Liberal commentator William Schneider observes in the *National Journal* that Bush, not McCain, is a truer Reaganite. "Bush," Schneider writes, "is reaching out to South Carolina Democrats and independents who share his conservative philosophy." McCain, by contrast, "has a different strategy for going after Reagan Democrats. One that's not ideological."

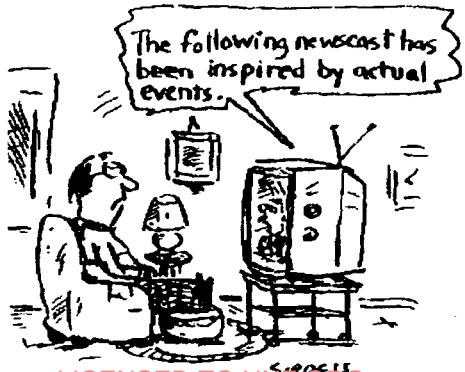
The inclusiveness of the Great Communicator was not his ability to morph into different personalities or politics according to congressional district or ethnic enclave; it was his power to make important ideas about freedom understood by millions of Americans. It was his capacity to explain to Republicans and Democrats alike why America was good and communism was evil. And, most important, it was his resolve to hew to fundamental principles.

McCain, referred to by South Carolina Congressman Lindsey Graham as a "fighter's fighter," knows how to appeal to a certain Reaganesque sensibility. But it's unclear if McCain is appealing to that sensibility to make the case for a conservative agenda, or if he is simply selling himself.

Len Hulme, a lifelong Democrat from Philadelphia who trekked south to lend his support to the senator, reports, "I'm 68 now and I haven't felt this way for a person since John Kennedy, when I was 29." I ask if his feelings about John McCain reflect a new openness to limited government? Hulme stares at me, then shakes his head. "The only Republican that I would vote for is McCain."

Which raises a final question: Who are all these fashion–conscious politicos running the McCain party? Isn't conservatism supposed to be about that which is timeless, good and noble by dint of its power to transcend the ebb and flow of personal taste; about bigger things and ideas than what people like *now*? I stare at a bevy of bell-bottomed McCain staffers handing out pom-poms under a bath of colored light. Behind them is a professional "handmade" poster: "McCAIN 4 PREZ." Who exactly are these people? Conservatives bent on a smaller government owned and operated by the American people? Or trendsetters with no clearly defined ideology or political persuasion who like (at least for now) John McCain's hard-to-resist personality?

—**Peter Savodnik** *is a reporter for the* Daily Progress *in Charlottesville, Virginia.*



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James Glassman

A Right to an Internet Connection?

A spectre is haunting America. The spectre of a "digital divide." That, anyway, is what President Clinton thinks. He said in his State of the Union Address on January 27 that Congress needs to provide subsidies to help low-income folks get computers and Internet access.

"Opportunity for all," he said, "requires something else today—having access to a computer and knowing how to use it. That means we must close the digital divide between those who've got the tools and those who don't." A few days later, he presented a plan costing $2.3 billion.

You'll be hearing more and more about this crisis in the months ahead. Al Gore, for one, has adopted it as a campaign theme. And who could object to spreading the benefits of high technology to people who can't afford it?

But there are two important questions to answer: First, does a digital divide really exist?

In a recent study, the Stanford Institute polled 4,113 people and found the key factor in Net use wasn't race or income but education.Still, little education often equals little income.

The Commerce Department has data showing that the richer you are, the more apt you will be to use the Internet. For example, in 1998, some 19 percent of Americans earning between $25,000 and $35,000 a year use the Net, compared with 60 percent of those earning more than $75,000. But this should hardly come as a surprise. The rich are usually faster adopters of new technology; over time, everyone catches up. Television penetration went from 10 percent in 1950 to 90 percent in 1955.

And the Internet numbers are changing rapidly. Ekaterina Walsh, author of a study by Forrester Research, says flatly, "There is no digital divide in terms of race." Her study showed that Latinos were on line in about the same proportions as whites, and African Americans, who last year increased their spending on computers by 143 percent, are catching up quickly. Using Andersen Consulting research, Adam Clayton Powell III points out that "by the time the next President completes his term, in 2005, 91 percent of U.S. households will be on line."

> In 2005, 91 percent of households will be on line.

That should be no surprise. Computer ownership in the U.S. has gone from 1 percent in 1980 to 22 percent in 1990 to 44 percent in 1998, and it continues to soar. Internet usage jumped from one-tenth of households to one-third between 1995 and 1998.

But even if a digital divide exists, the real question is what do we do about it? And who is "we"? For President Clinton and others, "we" means the government. Yet I don't believe the state has a role in this.

Lawrence Summers, now Secretary of the Treasury, put it best in an interview a few years ago with Daniel Yergin: "Markets are able to do things that people used to think required government coordination. Markets make it possible to rent videos in every town in America with no [government] involvement."

The way to spread computer ownership and Internet use is to make the technology better and cheaper. Only the private sector can do that—and it is. Today, you can buy a fabulous computer for less than $700. Unlimited connections to the Internet cost as little as $9.95 a month.

No industry has improved its products as quickly or has pushed prices down as rapidly as the U.S. computer sector. Since 1990, the price of a megabyte of memory has dropped by about 90 percent, while computing speed has increased about 500 times.

Corporations are waking up to the importance of getting their employees wired at home as well as at work. On February 3, Ford Motor Company announced it would provide a free computer to every one of its 350,000 workers worldwide, along with Internet access for just $5 a month. Delta Air Lines, with 75,000 workers, announced a similar plan the next day. Private-sector solutions are spreading.

In a country in which two-thirds of families own their homes, nearly all of us can own a computer and go on line if we think it's important. But right now, despite its incredible growth, the Internet is not as compelling as it could be. There is no application so fabulous as to compel people to use the technology. And for many (especially the old and less educated), computers are not that easy to use.

The biggest problem, though, is the lack of super-fast connections. The Internet is too slow. The technology exists to bring speedier Internet access to practically every American, but until recently it has been held up by the local phone companies, whose monopoly over the final telephone wires into the home has deterred competition. Things are changing, as competition from cable modems, satellite, and wireless delivery systems heats up.

Government regulation and monopoly is the reason improvements aren't coming even faster. If politicians want to democratize the Internet, that's where they should concentrate.

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Two Views

TWO LEADERS OF THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT DEBATE
ENGAGEMENT VERSUS WITHDRAWAL FROM POLITICS

What Role for Religious Conservatives?

Cal Thomas **Jay Sekulow**

At the February national convention of the National Religious Broadcasters, Cal Thomas (the former Moral Majority vice president who is now one of the country's most widely circulated newspaper columnists) debated Jay Sekulow (an attorney who heads the American Center for Law and Justice, which litigates for religious liberty) on religious political activism. An edited transcript follows.

SEKULOW: I like Cal Thomas. I don't like *Blinded by Might,* the book he's published with Ed Dobson arguing that the religious Right should unilaterally disarm and withdraw from politics. A lot of good has come out of political activism by religious people. We have not won every battle, but nowhere in Scripture are we called to be successful. We're called to be obedient. Engaging these issues is part of the price of our freedom.

I disagree with the idea that people like Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell, James Dobson, or countless others have engaged in battle inappropriately. There's nothing wrong with motivating literally millions of people to call their Congressmen to deal with important issues, even if the airways are used, even if direct mail is used. Ministries' using direct mail is not something evangelicals invented. Dr. Martin Luther King and the NAACP Legal Defense Fund headed by Thurgood Marshall in the 1940s and '50s produced perhaps the best fund-raising material I've ever seen.

> IF IT WEREN'T FOR THE POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT OF CHRISTIANS, MANY IMPORTANT ISSUES WOULD NOT BE DISCUSSED.

If it weren't for the active involvement of Christians, many important issues would not be discussed. Most Americans don't understand the significance of these issues until we bring them up. I'll never forget the passionate debate brought about when Senator Rick Santorum showed exactly what a partial-birth abortion is.

One of my favorite theologians, Abraham Kuyper, was also a Prime Minister. He founded a university and edited a newspaper, and he said, "There is not one square inch of the entire creation about which Jesus Christ does not cry out, 'This is mine, this belongs to me.'"

We have a cultural mandate. It's not that Kuyper or today's religious followers of politics are "blinded by might," as Cal's book title puts it. They are simply taking their cultural mandate seriously. Jesus commanded us to love our neighbor. Part of that love of neighbor is being engaged in these political issues.

In a Supreme Court case I had in 1993, the attorney general for the State of New York argued that religious advocacy has no benefit to the community at large—something very similar to what the Federal Communications Commission tried to argue recently to squash religious broadcasting. Justice Scalia observed during the oral arguments that it used to be thought in New York that religious advocacy and religious people—"God-fearing people" as he put it—were very important to the health of a society. Among other things, faithful citizens were less likely to mug me or rape my sister. If New York doesn't take that view anymore, asked Justice Scalia, "How's the new regime doing?"

The new regime, I submit, is not doing very well. Is the religious Right "blinded by might"? Absolutely not. Desiring change in our culture? Absolutely. By whatever ethical means necessary, we need to engage in this struggle.

THOMAS: Now it's time to hear from the heretic. During my five years with the Moral Majority, I was confident of the ability of people like us to organize ourselves into a political force that would restore righteousness in America.

Today, my tactics and priorities have changed. I am now convinced government lacks the power to bring about the changes we wish to see. For the last 20 years, and during earlier periods such as Prohibition, many have tried to reform culture from the top down, believing that unrighteous behavior was a matter of poor leadership.

Many blame President Clinton for our woes. Perhaps the problem is us, and he is merely our mirror image. As a nation, we worship the golden calf of materialism. We have easy divorce even among Christians, and other scandals.

Our society can't be improved apart from faith, which transforms from the inside. That improves the outside, but if believers try to clean up the outside without seeing to the inside, they are doomed to futility. My co-author and I are not calling for political

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pacifism. We can exercise our right to vote or not, and lobby. We must pray for those in authority, whether we like them or not. But something is out of balance. Too many of us give lip service to the gospel while spending most of our energies on politics.

Newt Gingrich kept the Contract with America but sadly violated contracts with two wives and now consorts openly with a woman to whom he is not married. Should we expect lawmakers who cannot impose morality on themselves to be successful in imposing it on the nation? Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world." Why then are so many intent on fixing the world? Much of it has to do with the illusion that access to authority figures is power, but as Glen Campbell sings, "There's a load of compromisin' on the road to that horizon." Political access becomes our goal. The gospel is held hostage to a political agenda.

I like what Jim Kennedy said in a sermon five days after Reagan was inaugurated. The sermon was titled, "Can Reagan Save America?" The text was Jeremiah 17:5, warning against the dangers of putting one's trust in men. He wrote, "I am afraid that some of us, though loudly proclaiming ourselves to be Christians, are at least partial humanists. That is, we trust Jesus Christ to save our souls, but we trust President Reagan to save our country." I would quote Jerry Falwell in a previous incarnation: "We have a message of redeeming grace through a crucified and risen Lord. Nowhere are we told to reform externals. We are not told to wage war against bootleggers, liquor stores, gamblers, murderers, prostitutes, racketeers, prejudiced persons, institutions, or any other existing evil as such."

SEKULOW: We as believers are required to be salt and light—antiseptics—in the wider culture. I'm a Jewish convert to Christianity. I know that a Christian like Dietrich Bonhoeffer preached the gospel, but he also believed with all his heart that what was happening to my relatives in Germany was so wrong that direct action needed to be taken. Reverend Martin Luther King asked for assistance, and justice, through politics, and by God's grace that's what he got.

That church where Dr. King preached for so many years in Montgomery is actually in the shadows of the state capital. Dr. King brought the people from the pews out to the street, demanding social justice with a vision inspired by his religious commitment. We can't surrender now.

THOMAS: You haven't heard me say a thing about surrender. If I were surrendering, I wouldn't be writing my newspaper column.

I was not aware that loving your neighbor means loving Republicans and loving the state. I reject that interpretation. When the church aligns itself with a political party or movement, it isn't the state that's corrupted, it's the church.

What happened to the liberal National and World Councils of Churches—which now give sermons on environmentalism—is happening to the conservative churches. We are an appendage of the Republican Party. We should say instead, We have no king but Jesus Christ.

SEKULOW: I'm not in favor of aligning with parties. I model our work at the American Center for Law and Justice after Democrat Thurgood Marshall, one of the best modern legal strategists.

Our job as Christians is to share the gospel and be a cultural preservative, if you will. I don't think those two things are mutually exclusive.

THOMAS: I don't think they're mutually exclusive either. I do think our primary objective is not to tinker with the kingdom of this world. It's the same with my motel room: I don't like the wallpaper, but I didn't call an interior decorator to redecorate, because I'm only staying for one night.

My great concern is what happens when the clergy descend from the pulpit. The clergy are ordained—the dictionary says that means "set apart"—to preach a different gospel from the gospel of cultural renewal.

Now if the gospel *is* preached, it can and often does renew culture. But trickle-down morality cannot work.

SEKULOW: I look for every opportunity God gives me in the courtroom to share the gospel. Believe it or not, I am good friends with the president of the American Civil Liberties Union, Nadine Strossen. My hope and prayer is one day she's going to call my office and *not* talk to me about whether some government policy is an establishment of religion, but say, "I've got a void in my life. How do I fill it?" So part of our work is relationship building. Again, the spheres are not separate.

INTERNAL TRANSFORMATION OF AMERICANS, NOT POLITICS, WILL PRODUCE A CHANGED AMERICA.

THOMAS: Most of my friends are liberals and pagans, and I feel the same way about building relationships in order to show them something other than the stereotype of the know-nothing, uneducated, judgmental, anti-anti-anti.

Most of my liberal friends want to know, Why do you love me, why do you hang out with me? In our book, we've got interviews with Norman Lear and George McGovern. You ought to read what turned them off to the gospel early in their lives.

How we present the person of Christ is important. I do not accept the idea that because the Left does everything, we can go down to their level.

SEKULOW: I represent the activist on the street. I just had a case representing a woman who handed out pro-life literature in front of abortion clinics in Colorado. It's a crime there; you go to jail for seven months. That's how free our speech is today. I don't want people to think that her kind of one-on-one activism should stop.

Faith and politics are not separate. In our culture, this is no time to retreat. We may not like the legislative process, but someone's morality is always being legislated.

THOMAS: We've put too much faith in sending the right person to Washington. The political process is very limited in what it can do for our moral and spiritual problems.

Let's not be under any illusion that anything short of the regeneration of Americ*ans* will produce a changed Americ*a*.

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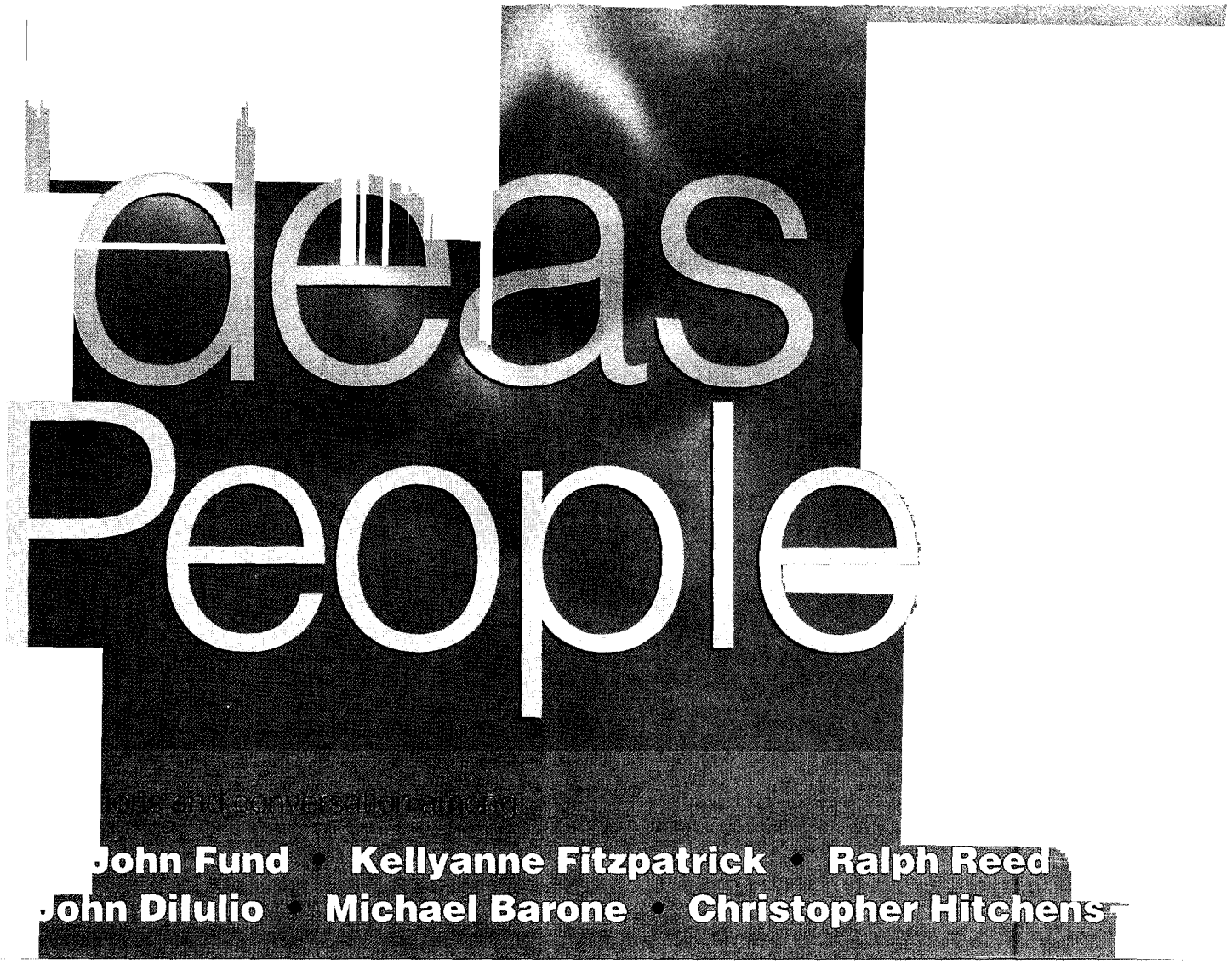

People

Bush. Gore. McCain. Bradley. Buchanan. Who are they and what do they want? To mull the surviving crop of presidential hopefuls, we hosted Wall Street Journal *editorial writer John Fund, Kellyanne Fitzpatrick (founder and CEO of The Polling Company), and Ralph Reed (former director of the Christian Coalition, now a political consultant).*
TAE *"Opinion Pulse" editor Karlyn Bowman acted as moderator.*

FUND: To understand where John McCain is coming from, you have to look at his adopted state of Arizona.

It's not too much of an exaggeration to say that McCain occupies not only the Senate seat of Barry Goldwater but also the niche that Goldwater filled in American politics for a long time: the popular contrarian.

The difference, of course, is that Barry Goldwater was treated far differently by the media when he was in his political prime. He only achieved the roles of statesman and popular grandfather after he ceased to be politically relevant. John McCain has achieved that while in the prime of his political career.

The question with John McCain, though, is what does he believe in and what kind of a President would he be? The cliché right now is that he would be a cross between Teddy Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan.

One senator who is well disposed towards McCain, and who has studied him for many years, says that unlike almost anyone else he's met in public life, McCain really does care about duty, honor, country. It is at the very core of his being. The problem is, once you get beyond that, there's not a whole lot of ideological commitment there.

In McCain's chairmanship of the Senate Commerce Committee, he's shown a bias towards free markets, but also a ten-

photography by Sylvia Johnson

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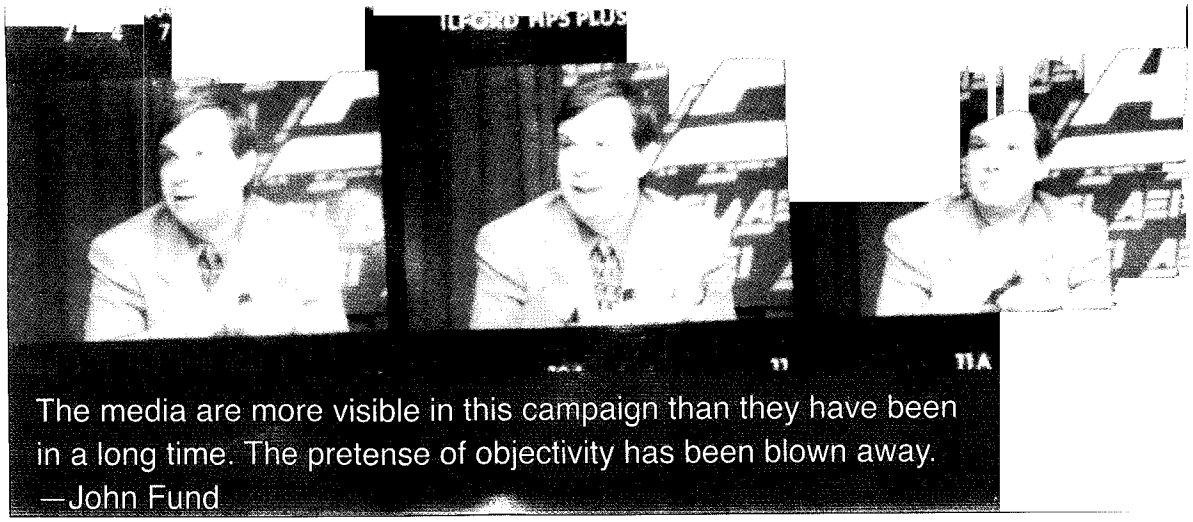

The media are more visible in this campaign than they have been in a long time. The pretense of objectivity has been blown away. —John Fund

dency to beat up on companies, and to propose legislation which would regulate industries. Then when the industry caves in due to the threat of congressional legislation, he backs off.

John McCain is not ideologically driven but impulse driven. You see that in the way that he reshapes his health care plan day by day.

If you look at George Bush, his resume may not remind you of Dwight Eisenhower but his personality, his style, his desire to unify the party and the country, and his non-confrontational approach do. Eisenhower tried to appeal to Americans broadly in both the primaries and the general election in 1952. He didn't have to talk a whole lot about issues. His major strength was electability, and that of course is Governor Bush's calling card.

The problem is that George W. Bush, for all of his strengths, is not Dwight David Eisenhower. He can't run a broad, issueless campaign during the primaries. He has to draw an ideological contrast with John McCain by arguing "I am the conservative, John McCain is something else."

The consultants in Texas who designed Bush's original strategy were making a reasonable gamble. You raise enough money, you gather enough endorsements, you create the aura of inevitability. But the Austin powers were wrong, in part because of arrogance. They thought that they could just create the sense of momentum and not have to discuss a lot of issues.

Can you think of a presidential candidate in a front-running position within recent memory who, before he ran for President, had precisely two experiences with the debate format? One debate against Ann Richards in 1994 and one debate in 1998, when he ran for re-election, which was held on a Saturday night in El Paso. We all know what happens in Texas on Saturday nights: Everybody's out watching football games. And he lost that debate.

It is astonishing but true that George W. Bush, for all of his strengths and his winning personality, was the least prepared of almost any presidential candidate we've ever seen running for a party's nomination.

Moving on to the Democratic primary, Bill Bradley strikes me as an updated version of Adlai Stevenson, the cerebral candidate above the fray, not willing to get down and dirty. Of course, Stevenson secured the Democratic nomination at a time when bosses controlled the Democratic Party and you didn't have to make direct appeals to voters. He captured the nomination winning very few primaries.

Al Gore, meanwhile, reminds me of John F. Kennedy—and the utter ruthlessness with which Kennedy conducted his campaign. I'm surprised how the Clinton years have changed Al Gore. He was a fairly decent senator. I think the proximity to Clinton has made him ruthless, although there were already signs of this when he was thinking of running for President back in 1991. He said, "You make the decision to run first and then you run with all your heart and soul. You're going to have to rip the lungs out of anybody else who's in the race." That pretty much describes what Al Gore has tried to do to Bill Bradley. Gore is in danger, though, of losing the admiration and the fawning acceptance that John Kennedy had in the media.

The media are more visible and more obvious in this campaign than they have been in a long time. The pretense of objectivity has been blown away. John McCain's victory in New Hampshire was treated like the equivalent of the Second Coming. It's become open advocacy.

Howard Fineman of *Newsweek* said on the Don Imus show, "McCain has worked the press constituency just brilliantly." Notice that he used the term "press constituency." I thought John McCain represented the constituents of the state of Arizona. It turns out you could more aptly list him in the Senate directory as "John McCain, R-Media."

The media is intervening more and more in the presidential campaign process. But the only way you can criticize this media intervention is through the media. You have to have the active cooperation of the media to criticize the media, and they often don't provide it.

I'm going to go out on a limb here and say that reports of the political demise of the House Republicans are greatly exaggerated. Given the retirements and the way races are shaping up, the Republicans are going to keep the House. They are probably going to add seats in the Senate. Even if Republicans lose the presidency, remember that in 1992 the Democrats took the White House but lost House seats. When John F. Kennedy won the presidency in 1960, his party lost 22 House seats.

That's the good news for the Republicans. The bad news: I'm not sure they deserve to keep the Congress. Their record this last six years has been very checkered. It's all been in the shadow of Bill Clinton. I call it the Rommel Effect.

In World War II, the British Eighth Army had been so intimidated by Erwin Rommel and his Afrikakorps that they literally had lost the will to fight. So when General Montgomery took over the Eighth Army in 1942, the first thing he did was issue a letter to all of the troops. The letter basically said, "Rommel is not a superman. He is a creature of flesh and blood. He can be confronted, and if you have superior power and focused strength, he can be beaten. And I aim to beat him. I do not want this Army anymore to think of him as a superman."

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The Republicans in Congress have treated Bill Clinton like Erwin Rommel. They have been intimidated by him. They have believed that in any political confrontation, they are going to blink first. If you're convinced you're going to lose, you will lose.

So far, the 2000 election is turning out along those same lines, with Democratic aggressiveness personified by Al Gore, and Republican caution personified by the Play It Safe campaign of George W. Bush. Despite many natural advantages, the Republicans are perfectly capable of frittering away their chances.

FITZPATRICK: Over the last 20 years we have had three Presidents, and two of those Presidents are very important in this year's election. The first is Ronald Reagan, who continues to be mentioned often by Republicans.

The second recent President in the race this year is Bill Clinton. Every election cycle, voters want to extend all of the good that has immediately preceded that particular balloting, while remedying or erasing all the bad. In the case of Bill Clinton, there is much on both sides of the ledger. Clinton is credited by many voters with having a hand in today's longest-ever economic boom; he is also ridiculed even by members of his own party for having disgraced the honor and integrity of the presidency.

Al Gore will try to Superglue himself to the positive side of the Clinton ledger while ignoring the rest. Other candidates, including Bill Bradley and all of the Republicans, will disclaim the moral part of the Clinton legacy.

George Bush the elder, our other President of the last 20 years, is least on the minds of Americans. But the irony is George Bush's namesake and lookalike is all over this election. And the reservoir of good will for the Bush name and the Bush family is genuine and deep.

But the media also helped produce George W. Bush as a Republican front-runner. Over the last two years, much of the polling was just on Gore versus Bush. I can tell you, as Dan Quayle's former pollster and current and forever friend and admirer, that there came a time when I looked at him and suggested, only partly tongue in cheek, that we might have a claim for some serious equal-airtime compensation just for being left out of the national polling questions for two straight years.

Until Ross Perot in 1992 garnered 19 percent of the popular vote (and 23 percent of the so-called Generation X vote), there was very little appreciation of the importance of the independent voter. But today 13 percent of all Americans are registered as independents. Over 50 percent of registered voters in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and in my home state of New Jersey are independents. Those are phenomenal numbers.

There are two types of independents. The first category are independents who think a lot about politics, are slow to make up their minds, and resist front runners. They are neither angry nor apathetic; they are deliberative. These independents have been crucial in 2000, taking some primaries in unexpected directions.

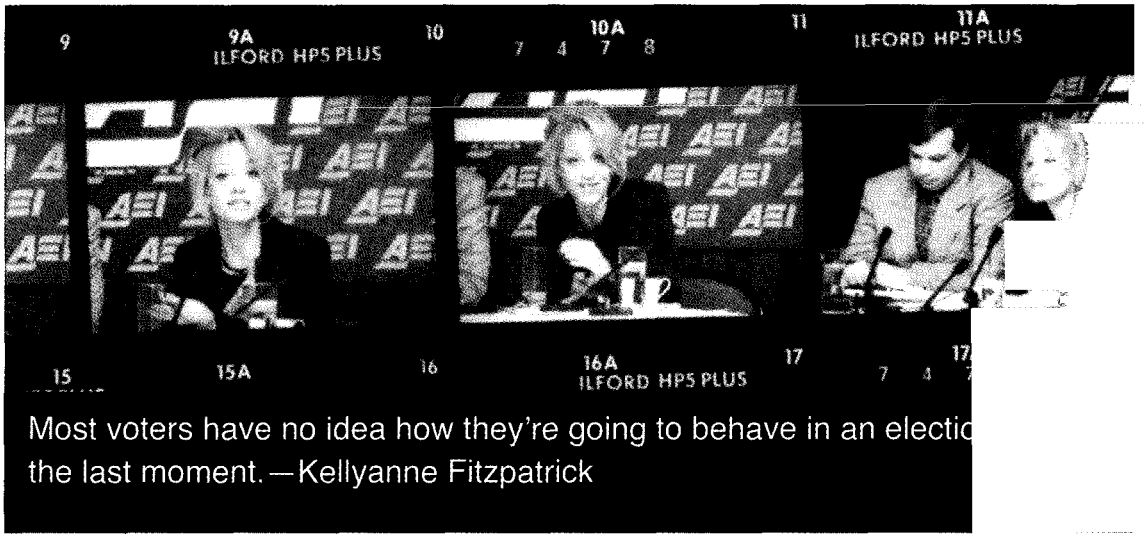
The second category of independent says, "I don't like politics. They're all bums. I visited Washington twice in my life on class trips, and I think everything there is one big partisan game where nothing gets done." When you ask these people who their Congressman is, they don't know. On the Wednesday after Election Day, these are the ones who wake up and say, "Oh, was that yesterday? Missed that."

We can't dismiss them out of hand, because they may vote if their type of candidate ends up running. And, hold on to your seats, there's still time for someone who none of us are focusing on right now to run for President of the United States and appeal to such voters. Someone like Donald Trump or Warren Beatty or Cybill Shepherd or Jesse Ventura can come out of nowhere and run, and get 2 percent of the vote, 3 percent, 8 percent, whatever. There may be some dot-com guy out there in Silicon Valley, if any of them are the required 35 years of age, ready to run for President.

Another thing that has become crucial to 2000 is the invisible pollsters from whom you are getting much of your election news this year. The entire Republican presidential contest shaped up according to one factor—who can win—that was proliferated through media-sponsored polls. Polls said nobody could beat George W. for the nomination, for instance.

Actually, though, most voters have no idea how they're going to behave in an election until the last moment. Candidate preferences are apt to change between Friday and Monday, let alone over a year.

Invisible pollsters, who don't know how to take "I don't know" for an answer, have told us that only 5 percent of the



Most voters have no idea how they're going to behave in an electio
the last moment.—Kellyanne Fitzpatrick

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> If Gore is the nominee this will be a vicious, nasty, brutal "take no prisoners" campaign. Gore has assembled a murderer's row of the most notorious handlers and advisers. —Ralph Reed

country is undecided for President. Actually, I think more than five percent of the Gore family is undecided at this point.

BOWMAN: Ralph, which players do you think will be most important in 2000?

REED: If Pat Buchanan becomes the Reform Party nominee, he could be very important. If it is a Bush-Gore race, Buchanan has the potential to draw votes away from Bush.

A second very important player is going to be the labor unions. They've committed everything they have to electing Al Gore and a Democratic House. There's less of a chance of the Democrats gaining control of the Senate, although I still think the Senate is in play.

People have written the obituaries of the religious conservative constituency, but that vote is still out there. If it turns out in big numbers in 2000, it will allow the Republican nominee to go into a contest with Gore with a virtually solid South—probably Kentucky and Tennessee will be in play—combined with the Rocky Mountain states. That would boil the presidential campaign down to an eight- to 12-state contest; namely, the Catholic Belt, or what we used to call the old Rust Belt states across the Great Lakes, beginning with New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and then Ohio, Michigan, Missouri, and Illinois. And obviously California.

Another important constituency is the business community, which appears to understand the need to have a strong grassroots turnout operation to counteract the labor unions.

BOWMAN: Do you think Bill Clinton will be a significant factor in November?

REED: Clinton is like a Dickens character, hanging around the shadows of the race. The desire by the electorate for a different kind of leader and a fresh start is the subtext for the entire campaign.

All four of the leading candidates have been able to successfully tap into this desire. Even Gore has done his Declaration of Independence. He's been almost strenuously critical of the President while also trying to take credit for the economy. So just as the post-Watergate period gave us Jimmy Carter, it's fairly clear that the electorate is reacting to Clinton's personal failures and the way he's brought disrepute and shame on his office.

If you look at the survey data, when it comes to the economy, voters think the country is moving in the right direction by a margin of about 58 to 15. When you ask them where the country is heading in terms of values and morals, the numbers almost invert.

So the 2000 election really boils down to this: How can we keep the economy going in the same basic direction while changing the direction of the country in terms of values?

BOWMAN: What role do the three of you see for the political parties and activist groups?

FUND: The political parties are even less relevant than they used to be, partly because of the campaign finance "reforms" of the past. They still raise money, but they're wholly owned subsidiaries of the dominant political personalities. The Democratic National Committee's sole purpose in the 1996 election was to take some of the responsibility away from the fund-raising practices of the White House, so that Bill Clinton could say, "I am *shocked* to discover what the DNC has been doing. How dare they?" The DNC became a blame-shifting device.

As for the activist groups, the religious Right is less of a player, not just because of diminished influence, but in part because it's become blended into the Republican Party as a whole. It's less distinct. Every single presidential candidate this time in the Republican Party was, to some degree or another, pro-life. So I think the religious Right's influence is down institutionally for a variety of reasons, but its influence within Republican Party remains strong.

The unions are an even more powerful influence in the Democratic Party. Al Gore will owe his nomination to the unions, which is why you will see him almost never mention free trade, even though he was there for all of the free-trade agreements Bill Clinton initiated or helped bring to fruition.

Al Gore is a wholly owned subsidiary of the unions. He will not challenge them on anything. Bill Bradley used to vote for school-choice measures. Bill Bradley used to be proud of the fact that he was a free trader. Bradley reversed himself on school choice and muted his support of free trade, which shows how important the unions are.

FITZPATRICK: Much has been said about the demise of the Christian Right. It's really just been a topping off. And they have twice as many kids as the rest of the population, so 20 years from now you're going to be hearing about another resurgence of the Christian Coalition.

I can tell you that one of the main reasons conservatives are so hungry to win back the White House is to say to the unions, "Paycheck protection is going to pass. The Supreme Court *Beck* decision is going to be enforced. Union abuses in politics and the workplace are going to end."

FUND: The economy is interesting. Though consumer confidence is at all-time highs, people in the back of their minds realize the business cycle has not been repealed. There will be some kind of dip eventually.

I don't think the Republican candidates have done a sufficient job of saying the issue is not, "Is today's economy prosper-

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ous?" but rather, "How do we extend and expand this prosperity?" Al Gore and Bill Bradley have run around celebrating the economy and have not really had to address that. So far, I don't think the Republicans have figured out a proper response to the Democratic message of prosperity.

FITZPATRICK: Al Gore is still the best-positioned person to be the next President of the United States, because he's got in spades what it actually takes to win. The old saw was that you had to have fire in your belly to be elected President; in modern times you have to have bile in your throat—and he's got it.

You cannot undervalue the sheer advantage of a candidate's wanting something so badly that he'll stop at nothing to get it. Go ask Jack Kemp what it means when you go up against Al Gore and you don't want something as badly as he does.

Al Gore is fun to pick on, but he sure as heck can get 43 or 44 percent of the vote, and this could be the third time in a row that we allow a Democrat to be elected President with less than 50 percent of the vote.

I think that Gore would choose Bradley as his vice presidential nominee, though I don't know that Bradley would accept. People say, "But Gore hates Bradley at this point." Who cares? Gore will do anything it takes. That is a tough ticket to beat, Gore-Bradley. They'll say, "Oh, let's cross hands and sing Kumbaya. Isn't it nice that we were tearing each other apart and we all get along now?" In key states like New Jersey, they'd walk away with it.

FUND: One Democratic senator told me at the time of impeachment that he feared Clinton's escape could be the ultimate Pyrrhic victory. If Al Gore had succeeded Bill Clinton through Clinton's resignation or removal from office, I have no doubt he would have grown into the job, soldified his position, and been a formidable incumbent President. Even Gerald Ford, with much less natural political ability, held Jimmy Carter to 50 percent of the vote when he ran to defend what he'd inherited. Incumbency is a very valuable asset. So this Democratic senator told me that blocking impeachment may be the worst political decision the Democratic Party could make.

I agree with Ralph. Clinton is Banquo's ghost. He's constantly lurking around the election—and not to the advantage of Al Gore. Bill Clinton is, to some voters, the lucky charm of the economy. But he is also a distasteful reminder of the moral laxity they fear will infect their children and their families.

If Al Gore loses the November election and it's at all close, I think we can say the decision of the Democratic Party to close ranks and march with Bill Clinton was a fatal one, because it may have been marching off the political cliff.

BOWMAN: Ralph, who might the Republicans select for Vice President?

FITZPATRICK: You may want to mention you work for Governor Bush.

REED: Yes, I do. And that even more greatly constrains my answer. I can only say I do think that Bill Clinton, by picking Gore, changed the calculus of the vice presidential pick in three ways.

First, it's less likely now that either party will try to "balance its ticket" ideologically, as was often attempted in the past. Bill Clinton picked a guy who, like him, was struggling to redefine the Democratic Party—a New Democrat or a "pro-business Democrat." They were both Southern border-state Democrats struggling to get out of a special-interest-favoring, too-liberal-on-crime-and-welfare box. So Clinton picked an ideological soulmate, and I think that's where things are heading this year no matter who the nominee is.

Second, Clinton laid to rest the notion that vice presidential picks are about geography. With cable television and the Internet and homogenization and immigration and assimilation, we're having national elections now. We don't vote as regions or states anymore.

Third, Clinton picked somebody who would be a full partner in his administration. Whatever you think of Al Gore ideologically and politically, you can't deny that he has been one of the most influential Vice Presidents of this century, perhaps in American history.

How does that fit into the Republican Party? It means that if Bush is the nominee, he's most likely to try to find somebody who is a conservative, as he is, but also has an inclusive leadership style, an emphasis on problem-solving and bringing people together instead of polarizing and partisanship. It's a leadership style where you lead by picking off some of your opponent's people, instead of dividing and demarcating.

I agree with what Kellyanne said about Gore. If Gore is the nominee, as I expect him to be, this will be a vicious, nasty, brutal, "take no prisoners" general election campaign. Gore has assembled a murderer's row of the most notorious handlers and advisers, in terms of their willingness to engage in personal destruction and smears of their enemies.

Look what they did to Bill Bradley. Whatever you think of Bill Bradley, the one thing that has never been questioned has been his commitment to racial justice. And they suggested that his health care plans would hurt blacks and other minorities. If they'll do that to one of their own, you can only imagine what they'll do to the Republican nominee.

I don't think there's anybody now operating in the Republican Party who goes to the lengths that the Gore people do. Gore's campaign manager Donna Brazille, for example, was fired from the Dukakis campaign for suggesting that then-Vice President Bush was having an affair. More recently she's accused Congressman J. C. Watts and General Colin Powell of being racial symbols for the Republican Party who don't care about minority children.

FITZPATRICK: What most galvanizes and defines the Left of the Democratic Party is hatred of the Right—not letting them win. That's what the refusal to impeach and remove Clinton was all about. Saving him was about not allowing Newt Gingrich, Trent Lott, and Ralph Reed to win.

BOWMAN: What about George W. Bush and McCain as the Republican ticket?

FUND: Let me plant another idea—Libby Dole is running around the country campaigning everywhere for George W. Bush. We've been there and done the Bush-Dole stickers. Watch that space.

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War or peace? Boom or bust? Boxers or briefs? What will the big issues be in this fall's election? Is there any substance at all in today's consultant-driven elections? The American Enterprise *convened John DiIulio of the University of Pennsylvania, Michael Barone of* U.S. News and World Report, *and Christopher Hitchens of* Vanity Fair *and* The Nation *to talk about that. Karlyn Bowman again moderated.*

DiIULIO : The track record of pollsters and pundits and political scientists in anticipating and interpreting the crucial ideas shaping national elections does not inspire much confidence. Start with the Clinton-Gore victory of 1992. At the time, we were told that in ending 12 years of Republican control of the White House, the election was a bellwether of a post-Reagan, New Democrat era whose sensible mandate for change would be evidenced in a new wave of electorate-pleasing policies in areas like health care particularly.

Inside of two years and one sunken health care plan later, talk of New Democrat idea dominance was out. Talk of Republican-friendly, angry white males was in.

The '94 midterm congressional elections were widely interpreted at the time as a near-total repudiation of any pro-government ideas and anything having to do with Washington. This was the interpretation even of President Clinton himself. The era of Big Government was said to be over. Yet, in fact, if a total of just 19,500 votes had switched from Democrat to Republican in just 13 congressional districts, the name of the Speaker of the 104th Congress would have been Foley, not Gingrich.

BOWMAN: Provided that Foley's loss was one of the results getting reversed.

DiIULIO: That's right. But instead, Gingrich became Czar Gingrich overnight, riding a wave of popular dissatisfaction with all things Washington, with the most dissatisfied of all being the angry white males. And supposedly what the angry white males were most angry about was affirmative action. Never mind that between '86 and '94 women as well as men, and blacks as well as whites, and Democrats, independents, and Republicans *all* became less supportive of affirmative action. And never mind that by 1994 the so-called gender gap between males and females had actually shrunk. The claim was, The white guys are angry.

Yet despite this earthquake election, within two years this supposedly new, cohesive, powerful block of angry white male voters had disappeared. They were gone.

In 1996 their wives, the soccer moms, replaced them as the big, important, powerful, all-purpose voting bloc. Never mind that the decisive vote of white suburban women for Clinton over Dole almost exactly mirrored the percentages among the electorate as a whole—about 49 to 42 percent.

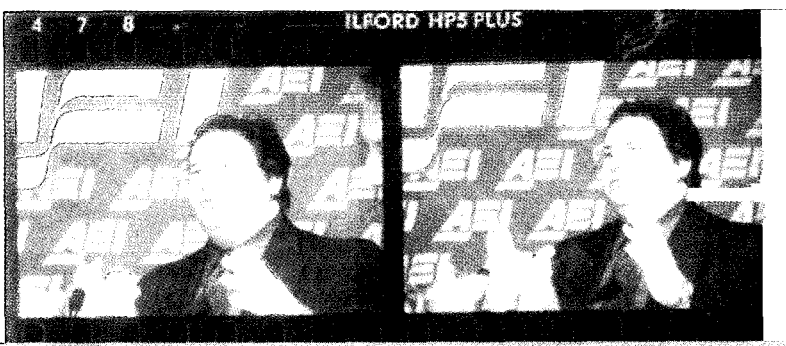
The election analysts said the soccer moms were pushed into Clinton's arms—maybe that's a bad choice of words—over the abortion issue. We were told the soccer moms favored essentially what Clinton favored: abortion on demand, for Clinton wouldn't regulate even partial birth abortions. Actually, only 27 percent of Americans who voted in the '96 presidential election favored abortion on demand. You may recall that many pro-choice Republicans lost seats in that election. But never mind.

Come 1998, Congress remained Republican, the President remained a Democrat. It was a status quo election. We were now to understand that the New Democrats, angry white males, and soccer moms had all suddenly been transformed into happy campers.

The last refuge of academic scoundrels who cannot explain or predict is to taxonimize; so let me conclude by taxonimizing and suggesting that there are basically two types of ideas or issues that will matter in this election. One is the so-called "position issue." A position issue is one on which rival parties or candidates reach out for support from various parts of the electorate by staking out different positions on policy questions in ways that divide the electorate.

But many of the issues employed in political campaigns today do not powerfully divide the electorate in this way. Instead of running on substantive differences in ideas and policies, candidates now often run by trying to link themselves in voters' minds to broad symbols that are almost universally approved or disapproved. Political scientists call these "valence issues," a term they borrowed from science—where valence refers to a chemical bonding process.

"Corruption" is a valence issue with a deep historical resonance in American politics, and it is now front and center in the form of the campaign finance debate. Obviously no one is



Instead of running on substantive ideas, candidates now try to link themselves in voters' minds to broad symbols that are almost universally approved. —John DiIulio

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in favor of bribery (except maybe in my native Philadelphia).

Candidates manipulate valence issues to link themselves in the public mind with warm and fuzzy values: honesty, honor, whatever. Negative symbols are also often staples of valence campaigns—weak leadership; unpatriotic beliefs; weak national defense; waste, fraud, and abuse.

Elections have always turned on a mix of valence issues and position issues. But the relative importance of symbolic valence issues over substantive position issues has risen sharply in recent elections. As image-making technologies like television have become all-important, this shift has accelerated.

The Clinton campaign of 1996 was almost pure valence politics. Every day there was a new symbol. School uniforms today, 100,000 cops tomorrow. (It started out as 50,000 cops in a bull session in Little Rock, and then the focus group found that 100,000 played better than 50,000.) As a result, substantive issues are no longer being used to mobilize the electorate. The presence of real campaign ideas is virtually nil today. Politics has been disconnected from governance.

So anyone who expects genuinely detailed recitations by the candidates on ideas such as education reform, or crime control, or good things happening in inner-city neighborhoods, or even taxes, will be disappointed. Instead, symbols and negative ads will define and drive the races, as well as much of the governing that follows.

BARONE: I think you can almost make the case that there are no issues at all in this year's election. The *Washington Post* recently ran an article with the headline, "Major Issues Favor Democrats." Now most reporters are Democrats, and so most reporters are quite alert to evidence of things helping the Democrats. They tend to be not very alert about things that help the Republicans.

What they were looking at in this case was a poll that showed things like education and Social Security—traditional Democratic issues—to be the top concerns of voters, coming out higher than issues that favor the Republicans, like moral values and cutting taxes. But if you look at the actual numbers in these polls, you find that education is cited as a concern by something like 13 percent of the electorate, Social Security is at 10 percent, moral values may be 8 percent, perhaps cutting taxes is at 7 percent.

I spent seven years in the polling business, and I know that for opinion purposes, the number 13 is the same as the number 7. There's no significant difference when responses are clustered at these low levels. You have a big issue in this country when you have 30, 40, or 60 percent of people volunteering that they're concerned about it. There simply isn't any issue or idea today that engenders that kind of response. So we're looking at an election in which there are no decisive issues, as John has suggested.

There are no major controversies this year on which every candidate must come up with a program or solution, as was the case back when, say, the war in Vietnam was raging, or the economy was collapsing, or there were U.S. hostages in Iran. The nation is not in obvious crisis. We are, some people might say, fat, dumb, and happy. We're not feeling threatened.

2000 gives all the signs of being a status quo election. If there were an incumbent President of either party eligible to run for re-election, he or she would be an overwhelming favorite.

The main reason Al Gore—the Vice President who is supported by the incumbent President as no Vice President has ever been supported before—is not an overwhelming favorite is the unfavorable personal feelings toward Bill Clinton that voters show even in the Democratic electorates. In New Hampshire, a solid majority of Democratic primary voters said they were *unfavorable* to Clinton.

My second point is that there are some very good reasons for this calm, and the disappearance of sharp political issues. I would contrast the 1990s with the period of 1965 to '75. Between 1965 and 1975, crime tripled in the United States. That's not up 3 percent or 30 percent—I mean up *200* percent, an astonishing change in social behavior. Between 1965 and '75, welfare rolls also tripled, despite there being no depression.

I think what happened was the civil rights revolution brought a sense of guilt to large numbers of Americans. Not just liberal academics but a broad swath of people started to ask, "Shouldn't we just give money to people who lack it?" and "Are we really entitled to punish people who commit crimes?" Remember, although one is not supposed to say so out loud, about half the crime in the United States is committed by blacks.

Hubert Humphrey, as Vice President, said, "If I were born in a ghetto, I would riot too. I might commit crimes too." The fact is, Hubert Humphrey wouldn't have committed crimes, nor would he have rioted. But that was the thinking of the liberal establishment: the law firms, the university presidents, the corporate execs. We expected people to commit crimes, go on welfare, not work, and not get married. As a result, we got some policy initiatives that today make no sense at all.

After a generation of this, the nation changed its mind in the '90s. Crime and the welfare rolls were pushed down beginning about 1993, on as sharp a curve as they increased in that dreadful decade between 1965 and '75.

The Clinton administration has claimed credit for this, but obviously much more credit is due to the state and local officials who actually took the initiative, the most prominent being Mayor Giuliani of New York and Governor Thompson of Wisconsin.

Sometimes I say to myself, Wouldn't it have been great if we had adopted the policies of Giuliani and Thompson two decades earlier? But if we had adopted those policies in the mid-1970s they wouldn't have worked—because the na-

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tional mind hadn't changed. We needed that generation of experience with the negative results.

My third point is that substantive political issues could return to our national campaigns rather suddenly. There's fascinating evidence that some of that may be happening already, though we haven't yet focused on it.

Take Social Security and Medicare, where the Democrats have taken the position of, as columnist Charles Krauthammer puts it, reactionary liberals: There will be no changes. We know for a fact that payroll taxes are not going to be able to pay for Social Security and Medicare by around 2014. Both George W. Bush and John McCain have called for personal investment accounts to supplement Social Security with earnings coming from the market. This is a big reform that could catch on.

Or take education. Real differences of position exist on vouchers, private schools, and so forth, because the Democrats are tethered to the education establishment that has been running our schools for a generation, and they can't get very far away from the teachers' unions.

Or take faith-based social work. Gore and Bush have both talked about this, but in different tones and in ways that may provoke controversy. So I think we may see some interesting, substantive debates here.

Recent polls like those by Ed Goeas and Celinda Lake present tantalizing evidence that some of these issues may play out with unexpected winners and losers. On Social Security, for instance, the basic assumption has long been that arguments over Social Security favor the Democrats overwhelmingly. But asked who would do a better job of handling Social Security, 40 percent of the public now says Gore, and 40 percent says Bush. Likewise, on education, it was 40 percent Bush, 42 percent Gore.

What this suggests is that the national mind may be changing on some issues of overwhelming social importance. We may be ready to see these issues in different ways from the way we've seen them over the last couple of decades.

So the final story on 2000, I think, is yet to be written.

HITCHENS: One troubling political reality that has recently been exposed in this country is that it isn't possible to remove a President from office by impeachment. Not if he's lucky with the Dow Jones, or with manipulation of the polls.

Nor in this country can an election be called or forced as it can be in Europe. It's become painfully obvious how much of an advantage this is to the powerful. Politicians can have their arrangements going, knowing exactly when they're going to need resources. The importance of that in influencing this year's primaries is very great.

Also troubling is the growing manipulation of public opinion. It's not very long since newspapers would debate whether they should print opinion poll findings at all; whether they should commission polls of their own; whether they should pay for them. Now it's impossible to remember such scruples. If you want to create a news story, you can do so simply by commissioning an opinion poll. It happens all the time. In these circumstances, I think one of the issues in the election should be the electoral process itself.

It would be interesting to see international observers sent to monitor the United States' 2000 elections to see whether it was free and fair. Things that would be examined would include the role of off-the-record money; the restriction of access to the ballot by independent candidates or third parties; and the rigging of presidential debates, as took place last time, with the exclusion of all other candidates by the two-party monopoly.

The dirty secret of the media is that we are the main recipients of all the slush-fund money that's raised and then spent for campaign ads. Thus there is little incentive for journalists to investigate the role of money in politics or the manipulation of candidates and issues.

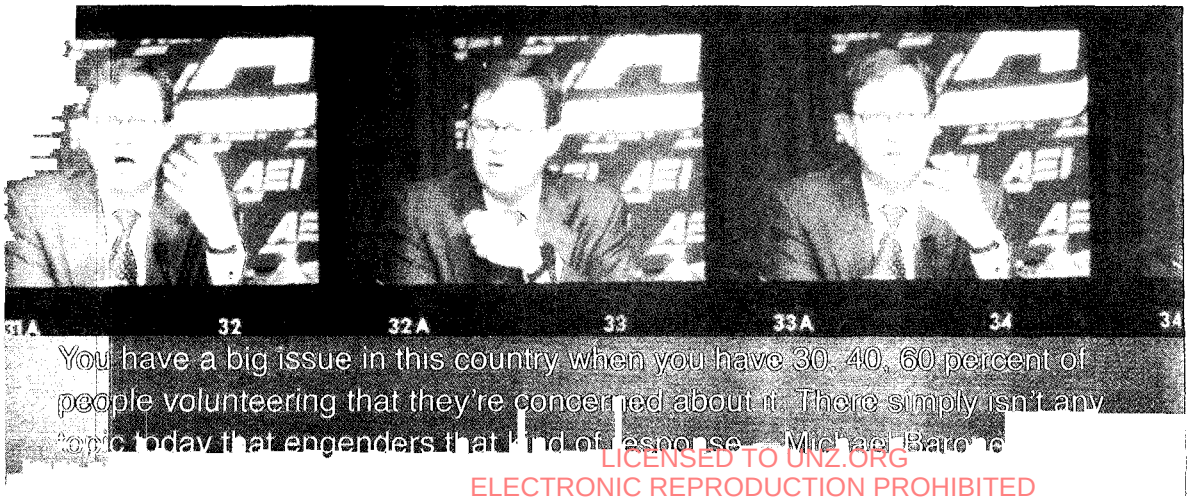
Today's electoral process is designed to interest least of all those whose principal interest is politics. All our candidates are pre-selected, old-shoe, club members. What we're watching is the exclusion of politics from the electoral process.

If I were to list some important issues that might be contested in the 2000 election, I would include:

- the pending decision on ballistic missile defense
- the war on drugs and its constitutional implications
- our commitment to the Balkans and the link that has to our relationship with Russia
- impending crises between China and Korea, and in Cuba
- capital punishment
- health care
- abortion
- tax reform

Of these, health care is currently mentioned as a kind of mantra, and abortion comes up in a symbolic manner. None of the other issues have a chance of surfacing in the election at all.

The only non-fringe candidate who campaigned boldly on a clear issue proposal was Steve Forbes and his late proposal for a flat tax. I don't think



You have a big issue in this country when you have 30, 40, 60 percent of people volunteering that they're concerned about it. There simply isn't any topic today that engenders that kind of response. —Michael Barone

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we are likely to find another candidate and issue coming together clearly in that way between now and November.

BARONE: To Christopher's complaint that our system of plebiscitary democracy has great defects, I guess one has to respond with Churchill's statement that democracy is the worst system you can conceive of, except for all the others that have been tried over the course of history.

The Founding Fathers gave us a system of elections by state elites, which produced some good results, but it didn't last. The political party system invented by Martin Van Buren has. There are a lot of absurdities in the American political process, but I'm not sure how you could do it better. Iowa and New Hampshire are where candidates are able to talk to actual voters, which ensures some contact and vetting by local people.

As for big national fundraising, these campaigns can't be run for free. The broadcast companies can't have their property—i.e., ad time—seized. The government could simply pay for it all, but that has never been popular with the public, because political ads strike most viewers as garbage, and they want as few of them as possible.

Candidates have to raise money from somewhere, and today they raise it from large numbers of people. George W. Bush has already raised money from 175,000 people. That's beginning to be a fairly broad constituency right there.

DiIULIO: The political parties as institutions—as opposed to fundraising consultancies—don't mediate very much anymore. Hubert Humphrey would not be able to gain his party's nomination today the way he did in '68. Party professionals at the state and local levels used to have a role in expressing to the candidates the concerns of the people they represented. That injected a reality principle.

There is a surreal character to a lot of what are being pawned off as the crucial ideas of Election 2000 so far. Not because the ideas are necessarily bad ones, but because no one is looking beneath the sheets and considering the precise consequences of the various proposals for faraway communities. Instead, candidates get away with making completely airy, abstract, and impractical claims.

BARONE: But you've got to use shorthand to interest even the half of the American people who are motivated enough to come out and vote in general elections. And some issues just have to be decided by elites in ways that ordinary people are not much engaged in.

Take one of Christopher's examples: missile defense. Our national policy on missile defense was changed by the Rumsfeld Commission in July 1998. An unelected group with access to secret U.S. intelligence, the commission produced a unanimous bipartisan report saying that rogue states have the potential of attacking the U.S. with nuclear weapons. That changed the policy of the Clinton administration, which had been adamantly against missile defense, to the point where Vice President Gore now says he will abrogate the ABM Treaty. The American people have not been much involved in this.

HITCHENS: Michael, wouldn't you accept that—impressive though the findings of the Rumsfeld Commission no doubt were—it's extremely probable that Gore adopted his current position on the ABM Treaty mostly so Republicans can't accuse him of not doing so? What he's done is stolen an issue.

BARONE: He's covering up part of his anatomy. It's politics as a futures market. You're running for election in 2004. The North Koreans have incinerated Los Angeles. What do you do against the charge that you could have had a missile defense system that would have prevented the thing from coming in and killing Michael Jackson and 14 million other people?

BOWMAN: To ask a naive question, if there are no major issues, what are we going to hear about in October and November?

DiIULIO: I think you're going to hear about issues, but I think you're going to hear about them in the way a car salesperson tells you about a sale: They'll hang up pretty banners.

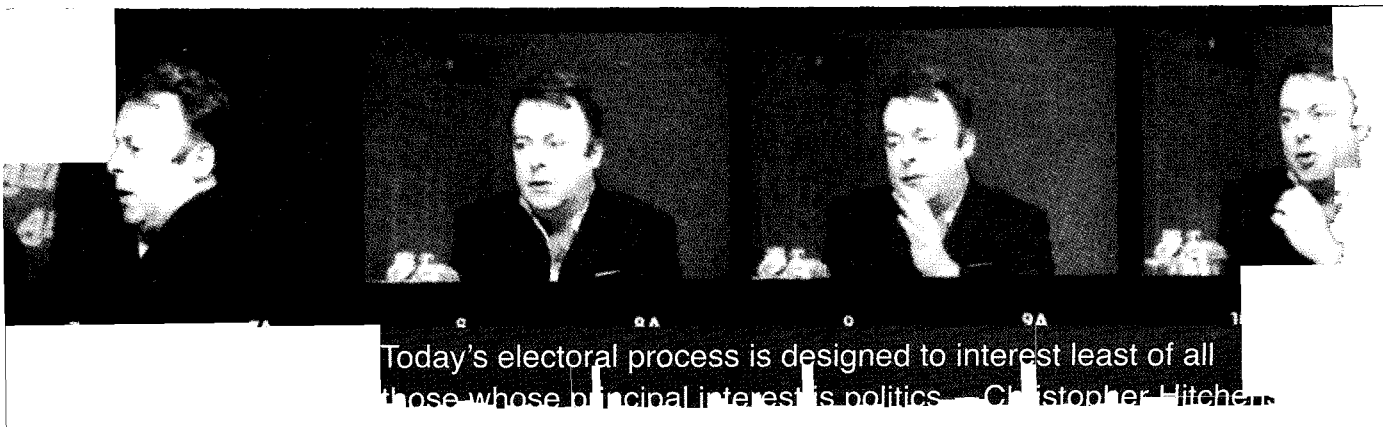
BARONE: Politicians have always used shorthand. And even a political cartoon can make a serious argument.

DiIULIO: That's right, on the one hand. On the other hand, the shorthand is no longer, in most cases, backed up by the long letter that they've written to themselves about what they might actually do if they get a chance to govern, and, heaven forbid, politics becomes something other than a permanent campaign.

BARONE: I remember a political consultant telling people, If you don't want to be identified with any one issue, send out a couple dozen, and people will say, "Well, he's busy and active."

BOWMAN: The tax issue is one on which the parties are deeply divided. What will we hear about that this fall?

HITCHENS: Most people don't understand the tax code anyway, and they don't believe in the good faith of the person making the promise. That's why I singled out Mr. Forbes' flat tax proposal as more significant than most. What he tried to say



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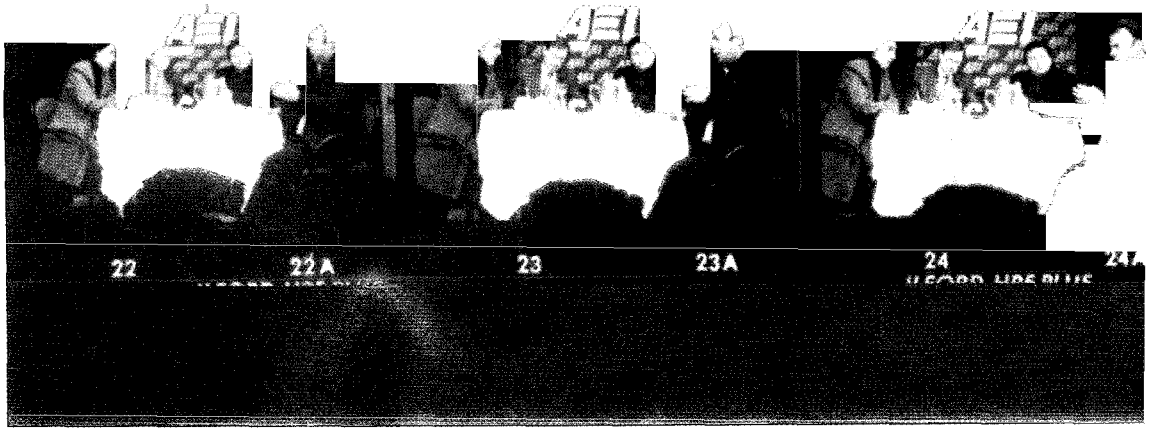

with the flat tax is that we need to reconsider the relationship of the citizen to the state.

BARONE: We are moving toward a society in which more than 40 percent of the revenue is produced by 5 percent of the taxpayers. Let's plunder the rich to give to everybody else.

HITCHENS: Worse, people often don't know whether they are breaking the law or not; so they live in a state of fear about the IRS.

DiIULIO: On taxes, an issue once owned by Republicans, there has been a convergence, with voters less likely to prefer GOP to Democratic treatments. And the Republican advantage has narrowed because they have been less specific and substantive in their proposals. Surveys show that the overwhelming majority of Americans have believed for quite some time that no one, regardless of income, should pay more than a total of 25 percent of his income in all taxes.

Despite that opening, the two parties are communicating bland and ever-more homogeneous tax policies.

BOWMAN: What is the effect of Clinton on this election?

BARONE: If Bill Clinton's truthfulness and reliability were not as poorly regarded as they are by most voters, Al Gore would be blazing ahead.

People are looking for character; typically, they look in the next President for what they've failed to get from the previous one. With Bill Clinton, that is truth and veracity. So one of the big things that all of the candidates are trying to do is to show their character. Bush says at the end of every speech, "I swear on that Bible to uphold the laws of the land. I also swear to uphold the dignity and honor of the presidency."

John McCain says very movingly, "No matter what, I'll tell you the truth."

Bill Bradley says, "We have to do things out of the goodness of our character," sounding like a secular version of a Christian conservative.

You've got to demonstrate that you are an anti-Clinton if you're going to win this election, and that's a handicap to Gore.

HITCHENS: I wish that was truer, but I see little evidence of a massive flight from Clinton. I had expected by now to see regularly replayed clips of the Vice President's speech on the White House lawn on the day after that banana-republic vote: the post-impeachment speech where Gore said this would be remembered as one of the great presidencies. I had expected that by now, if not from Senator Bradley then from the Republicans. I think the Republicans are still very gun-shy.

BOWMAN: Is today's press easy and non-probing compared to reporting in earlier eras?

BARONE: Few people know the name Garrett D. Horner. He was the White House reporter for the *Washington Star* who never thought there was much to the story of Watergate. I don't know where he is now, but Bob Woodward lives on Q Street and has a house in Nantucket, a place on the Chesapeake Bay, and so forth. The press is not immune to economic incentives.

DiIULIO: Political journalists, by and large, are extremely lazy and take what they're given and add a little opinion. Take the Christian Coalition story coming off the '94 election. We heard for two to three years that the Christian Coalition was this powerful, decisive force controlling the Republican Party. In fact, the Christian Coalition's main electoral impact was to increase the winning margin of candidates who would have won anyway.

HITCHENS: The Christian Coalition's role is to act as a Medusa's head for Democrats. It's what the Democrats use to keep their people in line. That's all.

Scandalously, the media often collaborate in trying to tamp down organized protests of the sort represented by the Christian Coalition. The year before last, Tom Brokaw came to the University of California-Berkeley to give a lecture, and he ended by saying that he considered it his job to ensure that every night the Great American Viewing Public went to bed believing that the country was in good hands.

BARONE: I observe a lot of elections abroad, and one of the things that fascinates me is that some of the defects of the American political process resemble the problems in places like Mexico and Russia. In Mexico, for instance, you hear people say, "A few insiders determine the outcome." In the United States, many more people are involved in the democratic process, yet it's still a small percentage of the national population.

HITCHENS: But in the United States you wouldn't wind up a corpse on the side of the road if you tried to open the process up further, whereas you still have a good chance of that happening in Mexico.

I love it when Americans say they are "disillusioned" with politics. Some say this is a cause for alarm. Actually, I would be alarmed if large percentages of people felt they had to get involved in the political process. I think it's to the credit of the United States that people here can live a large part of their lives without reference to politics.

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By Newt Gingrich

Political Lessons for

The electoral victories of Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Reagan, and the 1994 House Republicans led to enormous change. Reagan decisively pointed the nation in a different direction, and his economic reforms launched an entrepreneurial revolution. Margaret Thatcher changed British government and British economics in a similar way. Ironically, Thatcher and Reagan made possible the victories of their opponents and eventual successors Tony Blair and Bill Clinton—because they handed off much healthier societies and economies than Labour leader Callaghan or Democrat Jimmy Carter had been able to produce.

The Reagan-Thatcher team defeated the Soviet empire without violence —an enormous historic achievement that changed the future of the human race. And in 1994 the House Republicans' Contract with America produced welfare reform, tax cuts, and the saving of Medicare without a tax increase.

These conservative victories were fueled partly by liberal disasters. In 1979 Britain, in the "Winter of Discontent," the Callaghan government was disintegrating, the unions were stopping hospital work, people were freezing. Margaret Thatcher ran in an environment of unbelievable opportunity for conservatives with a simple message: Liberalism is not working. This was not a complex argument, so the news media could not distort it too much. Even the most liberal reporter could not persuade the average Briton that he was better off under the Labour Party.

Governor Reagan ran at a time when President Carter was presiding over tremendous inflation, dramatically rising interest rates, and a decaying economy. The Russians were in Afghanistan, and Americans were held hostage in Iran. Reagan was elected because he had a set of ideas and there was a disaster on the other side, including Teddy Kennedy's civil war against Jimmy Carter .

Reagan and Thatcher had a very consistent message. Both had a stubborn commitment to their principles. They articulated those principles in a common-sense way that the average person understood. They knew that they had to reach beyond the elites or the elites would destroy them. As Lady Thatcher said to me, "Never read the newspapers; it will simply confuse you. Keep doing what you think is right and allow the country to follow your leadership." She was right: Paying atten-

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tion to the talking heads of the news media causes conservative leaders to adopt a tactical, negative language that blocks them from communicating with the people.

We House Republicans framed the 1994 Contract for America campaign on the Reagan-Thatcher model. As in their victories, we faced a weakened opponent. Clinton had been a disaster. He had raised taxes, he was for gun control in a way that was destroying the rural Democrats, he was for left-wing social values, he was for a health-care program which scared the average person, his personal popularity had declined, and he was surrounded by scandals. We did not have to run a negative campaign. We ran a positive campaign of very big ideas.

It is easy to forget that we were laughed at when we launched the Contract. The media thought it was a complete joke, a terrible mistake, because we were actually being positive. We were giving the opposition and the media an agenda to attack. And yet we were disciplined, we were positive, we were stubborn, we drew a contrast, and we had a message for the grass roots, not for the elite media.

But then something happened to which we did not pay attention. The Left, out of power, began to learn. Clinton was desperate. He was not going to survive unless he changed the game. And he did.

First, he gave up most of his ideology. Clinton and Gore are liberal and very liberal, respectively, but if the price of the Presidency was to not be liberal, then Bill Clinton was prepared to not be liberal. Tony Blair may be a more sincere centrist than Clinton, but if you observe the contrast between Clinton and Dukakis in America, or between Blair and his predecessor Kinnock in Britain, you see very big changes.

The second big development in American politics was that Communism disappeared. Conservatism had been held together by anti-Communism, and the hard edge of conservatism was made legitimate and palatable because conservatives were standing up to serious competitors for world power. Without Communism, our toughness is not nearly as useful or appealing in a peaceful, prosperous society.

Third, the Left set out, very systematically, to hammer away at the code words that had once been our assets. By 1996, "family values," which was a strong asset to Ronald Reagan in 1980 and '84, had become a divisive term used by the Left in a way that convinced many younger women that we were against them having careers.

The Left also built a new media and spin system. If we lose the presidential election in 2000, this will probably be the biggest single factor. The Clintonites took the model of Republican operatives like Atwater, Ailes, Wirthlin, and Nofziger, and moved it up about two orders of magnitude. They trumped us with 125,000 ads, coordinated with unions, paid for by the trial lawyers, paid for by the Chinese Communists. They made a decision: they did not care what the editorial page said because nobody read it. They did not care what the evening news said because nobody watched it. They wanted to be on "Entertainment Tonight," they wanted to be on David Letterman, they wanted to be on the soap operas. They did not care what the elite media said, and they did not care what we thought. And that is probably the key to their survival in 1996, and to Clinton's survival of impeachment in 1998.

They also understood that media bias would save them over and over again. Michael Barone, the co-author of *The Almanac of American Politics*, has observed that everywhere in the industrial world, the media is essentially on the left. I would argue that even the conservative elite media ends up being on the left in its behavior. The so-called conservatives on television are, if anything, more hostile to Republicans than the liberals are, because they earn their kudos and are invited back on television to the degree that they savage the Republicans. If anything, they are more destructive than those who are overtly liberal. You expect liberals to attack you; what is shocking is the frequency with which the so-called conservative elites join the liberal elites in attacking the Republican Party. I suggest the odds are at least even money that by November, the person the Republicans nominate in March will be almost unrecognizable as the same person to average Americans, because the media will subject the nominee to a unending, relentless, hostile redefinition.

Reagan and Thatcher knew they had to reach beyond the elites or the elites would destroy them.

It is also important to understand that the Left has a very coherent system of ideas, which the Right does not have. The Left believes that class warfare and lawsuits are good, that business is always greedy and destructive, that the state is important, bureaucracy should be big, taxes should be high, and ethnic and sexual prejudices should be implemented in law. If you are Teddy Kennedy or Al Gore, when you wake up in the morning you know that the answer is higher taxes and bigger government, even if you are not sure what the question is. On the Right, we are so split into separate groups that we do not have a synthesized conservative alternative, and the result is a big mismatch in rhetoric.

Finally, one thing that has weakened the Right substantially is the celebrity culture, which the Left understands. They

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come out of it, they have the Hollywood stars, and they have the people who make money in this kind of system, which emphasizes winning without any kind of underpinning. The final question is, "Did you win? Did your movie do well? Are you famous?" And as long as the answer is, "yes," it is irrelevant how you got there.

We on the Right do not understand this culture. But it is the reason Hillary Clinton may be not only the next senator from New York, but perhaps also the Democratic nominee for President in either 2004 or 2008. That is a very serious possibility, because in the age of fame for fame's sake, she is a celebrity. A successful campaign for her will involve never really talking about a single issue; she will talk about the fact that as a celebrity she is glad to be with you here in your little school because isn't it wonderful to have a celebrity here and don't you feel really good about being near her famous glow and aren't you going to vote for her?

I do not know anybody in the conservative movement who understands how to create a successful conservative movement in a celebrity culture. But we need to begin by shedding the elite media's portrayal of conservatives as negative, judgmental, and hostile, and try to explain where we want the country to go in a positive way. We need to move from complaining to doing.

Remember: The Founding Fathers were astonishingly pragmatic. They looked at problems and tried to find solutions. Jefferson, though he favored the leanest possible government, nonetheless bought half the continent. Jefferson, who believed in a relatively weak presidency, sent the Marines to Tripoli without telling Congress. There is a practical streak in the American tradition, which I think all too many conservatives ignore.

Governing requires proposing. It requires being the thesis, not the antithesis. And if we intend to be a governing conservatism, we have to have a very different attitude about how we spend our time and energy.

In addition, in the age of the elite media, we must focus on the grassroots and not on Washington. I would say to any Presidential candidate, You had better have three or four big ideas, and you had better stick to them, and you had better not answer questions about little things, because one of the little things will become the headline, the lead on the evening news, the cover of the newsmagazine, and you never know which one it is because they will ask you 40 until they get to the one that hurts you the most.

A successful Presidential campaign has to be positive; to govern is to propose, not to oppose. It has to be personal, because all effective politics is personal. It has to be big, or the American people won't pay attention. This is a country of 260 million people with an enormous economy and rich culture. If you are not doing something big, why would they take their eyes off whatever they are currently doing to listen to you?

My model is Ronald Reagan, who as California's governor in 1970 proposed welfare reform at the National Governors Association. His peers voted him down, 49 to one. Think about that: The only person who voted for welfare reform at the National Governors Association in 1970 was Ronald Wilson Reagan, which, of course, did not discourage

I know no one who understands how to create a successful conservative movement in a celebrity culture.

him one inch. He just wondered how many years it would take for the rest of them to get it.

Twenty-six years later, standing on his shoulders, Republicans in Congress passed welfare reform three times. Bill Clinton vetoed it twice. By the third time, we had won the argument with the American people—not with the *New York Times*, not with CBS News—but with the American people so decisively that in the *Times*' own poll, 92 percent of the country favored welfare reform, including 88 percent of the people on welfare. (President Clinton, six weeks before the 1996 election, announced that he had actually invented welfare reform in Arkansas, that he was disappointed that it took us so long to pass it, and then he promptly began running commercials taking all of the credit.) Still, welfare reform was a 26-year project that has now saved millions of poor people from living a life without work and begun to move them onto the ladder of opportunity.

There are big issues like that out there today. A Social Security Plus program, which gives every person the right to have a personal savings account using 3 to 5 percent of his payroll tax, would permanently save Social Security without a tax increase or a benefit cut, give every young person a dramatically better retirement, increase the capital available to the private sector, and end class warfare, because the poorest Americans would become savers and investors within six months of going to work. That is the single most important project we could undertake.

I believe the Republican Party should adopt a platform plank that calls for capping all taxation—federal, state, and local—at 25 percent of income in peacetime. We would win that fight. We also ought to be aggressively in favor of abolishing the death tax. Let everybody on the left scream, "You are helping the rich!" And let everybody else say, "We do not think grandparents should be punished for taking care of grandchildren." Guess who is going to win the argument on those two sound bites?

We should have a major fight with the Left over freedom of faith. When everyday Americans see liberals objecting to saying the word *Creator* in school, they think they are mad.

And we should take on the burden of the inner city. If we truly believe that we are "endowed by our Creator," then should we not bring that endowment to every American in every neighborhood? Yes, that is going to be hard. And messy. And confusing. But there is something tremendously wrong with walking away from the poorest neighborhoods, the poorest children, and not finding a solution. If we are going to be practical and pragmatic, if we have better ideas, then we ought to be down there in the neighborhoods offering solutions that will work.

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Illustrations by Tom Gibson

FULL-CONTACT POLITICS

Time for Conservatives to Stop Whining and Start Fighting

BY DAVID HOROWITZ

Conservatives claim to be the defenders of personal responsibility, yet they have recently taken no responsibility for the predicaments they find themselves in. Instead, conservatives have blamed bias in the media, or the liar in the White House, or other unprincipled opponents, or even the immorality of the American people in order to explain their defeats. How can you win in American politics if you have contempt for the judgment of the American people? You can't. The greatest political deficiency of conservatism today is lack of respect for the common sense of the American people. This does not mean following polls or focus groups, or putting one's finger slavishly to the winds. It means that what is right politically (within a constitutional framework and consistent with deeply held principles) is what produces electoral majorities.

Liberals also fail to understand this. But they are currently fortunate to have a leader who does, and who uses his power to force his party to pay heed to the *vox populi*. The reason Bill Clinton is still President (and liberals are threatening to take back the House) is that he understands what the electorate wants, and gives it to them (or at least makes them think he has).

Despite the most deeply flawed Presidency of the twentieth century and the worst White House scandal since Watergate, Clinton is popular because he has remade his party both tactically and ideologically into a much more sensible faction (against the will of its old guard). While the liberal majority in his party dug in its heels and opposed free trade, welfare reform, balanced budgets, and a tough stance on crime, Clinton pursued a "triangulation" strategy with conservatives to do just the opposite.

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As a result, in the public's mind Clinton now heads the party of economic vibrancy, anti-crime laws, welfare reform, budget surpluses, and free trade. Those are things the American people want, and they believe liberals have delivered them. Unless conservatives change their strategies and tactics to adapt to this reality, they are fated for irrelevance. They cannot fight past wars and expect to win present battles.

Instead of complaining, conservatives should be asking themselves: How do Clinton and the Left pull it off?

You must give people hope in your political victory, and make them fear the victory of your opponent.

Here are six principles of politics that the Left understands but conservatives do not:

1. POLITICS IS WAR CONDUCTED BY OTHER MEANS. In political warfare you do not fight just to prevail in an argument, but to destroy the enemy's fighting ability. Conservatives often seem to regard political combat as they would debates before the Oxford Political Union, as though winning depends on rational arguments and carefully articulated principles. But the audience of politics is not made up of Oxford dons, and the rules are entirely different.

For starters, you have only 30 seconds to make your point. Even if you had time to develop an argument, the audience you need to reach (the undecided and not-paying-much-attention-middle) wouldn't get it. Your words would go over some of their heads and be quickly forgotten by the rest amidst the bustle and pressure of daily life. Worse, while you've been making your argument the other side has already painted you as a mean-spirited, border-line racist controlled by religious zealots, securely in the pockets of the rich. Nobody who sees you this way is going to listen to you anyway. You're politically dead.

2. POLITICS IS A WAR OF POSITION. In war there are two sides: friends and enemies. Your task is to define yourself as the friend of as large a constituency compatible with your principles as possible, while defining your opponent as their enemy wherever and whenever you can. The act of defining combatants is analogous to the military concept of choosing the terrain of battle. Choose the ground that makes the fight as "rigged" in your favor as possible.

But be careful. American politics takes place in a pluralistic framework, where constituencies are diverse and often in conflict. Therefore "fairness" and "tolerance" are the formal rules of democratic engagement. If you appear mean-spirited, nasty, or too judgmental, it will make the task easier for your opponent to define you as a threat, and therefore as "the enemy."

3. IN POLITICAL WARS, THE AGGRESSOR USUALLY PREVAILS. Conservatives often wait for the other side to attack. In football, this is known as a "prevent defense." In politics, it is the strategy of losers.

By striking first, you can define the issues and define your adversary. Definition is the decisive move in all political wars. Other things being equal, whoever winds up on the defensive will generally be on the losing side.

In attacking your opponent, take care to do it right. Going negative increases the risk of being defined as an enemy. Therefore, it can be counterproductive. Ruling out the negative, however, can incur an even greater risk. In the last California senatorial election, Senator Barbara Boxer, the number-one spender in the entire Congress, crushed a bland, moderate Republican who had the endorsement of both the state's liberal papers—the *Los Angeles Times* and the *San Francisco Chronicle* (the first time that had happened since the 1960s)—and was running ahead in the polls. Because Boxer went negative and the moderate didn't, she was able to define herself as the moderate and the moderate as the extremist. The American public favors the center. The decision to avoid the negative did not save the Republican from being defined as mean-spirited. But it did cost him the election.

4. POSITION IS DEFINED BY FEAR AND HOPE. The twin emotions of politics are fear and hope. Those who provide people with hope become their friends; those who inspire fear become enemies. Of the two, hope is the better choice.

But fear is a powerful and indispensable weapon. If your opponent defines you negatively enough, he will diminish your ability to offer hope. That is why liberals are so determined to portray conservatives as hostile to minorities, working people, and the poor.

The smear campaign against Clarence Thomas, for example, was designed to taint black conservatives as a warning to other blacks who might stray from the Democratic fold. Without their captive black constituency—the most powerful symbol of their concern for the victimized—liberals would be electorally dead. They would lose every major urban center and become a permanent political minority. Liberals exploit their image as the party of blacks to stigmatize conservatives as the party of racists. The success of these tactics means that as a Republican you may have a lot to offer African-Americans and other minorities, but you will have to work extra hard to get anyone to listen.

Because the religious Right has been associated by liberals with moralistic intolerance, it is easy for liberals to portray them as a threat to any constituency that does not share their values. "They will impose their morals on you." It does not matter whether this is true or not. Once a negative image has stuck, the target is wounded—often mortally—for the political battle.

If you know you are going to be framed as mean-spirited and intolerant, it's a good idea to put on a smile and lead with symbols that project generosity and inclusion. This will provide a shield from attack. When Clinton signed the welfare-reform bill he was flanked by two welfare mothers cheering him on.

Symbols are so powerful that if you manipulate them cleverly, as liberals do, you can even launch mean-spirited attacks on your opponents and pretend to be compassionate while doing it.

Liberals understand, for example, that positioning themselves as victims provides them with a license to attack. A gay politician like Rep. Barney Frank can assault an opponent and call it self-defense. The wife of the President can issue McCarthy-like proclamations about a "vast right-wing conspiracy" and get away with it because she is a woman and the First Lady,

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and because she has allies like James Carville and Sidney Blumenthal who will make her aggression look like self-defense.

Bottom line: If you are a white male in a culture whose symbols have been defined by liberals, be careful when you go on the offensive. And surround yourself with allies who are neither male nor white.

5. THE WEAPONS OF POLITICS ARE SYMBOLS THAT EVOKE HOPE AND FEAR. Style, especially for high public office, is as important as any issue position or propaganda strategy. Jack Kennedy—a relatively inexperienced, do-nothing congressman and senator—was able to win a national election merely by reciting problems and then repeating the litany "we can do bettah." Why? In part it was because he was handsome, witty, young, and charming, and wasn't a zealot.

Conservatives lose a lot of political battles because they come across as hard-edged, scolding, scowling, and sanctimonious. A good rule of thumb says be just the opposite. You have to convince people you care about them before they'll care about what you have to say.

When you do get to speak, don't forget that a sound bite is all you have. Whatever you have to say, make sure to say it loud and clear. Keep it simple and keep it short. (A slogan is always better.) Repeat it often. Put it on television. Radio is good, but with a few exceptions, only television reaches a public that is electorally significant. In politics, television is reality.

6. VICTORY LIES ON THE SIDE OF THE PEOPLE. This is the bottom line. You must define yourself in ways that the people understand. You must give people hope in your victory, and make them fear the victory of your opponent. You can accomplish both by identifying yourself and your issues with the underdog and the victim, with minorities and the disadvantaged, with the ordinary Janes and Joes.

This is what liberals do best, and conservatives often forget to do at all. Every political statement by a Democrat is an effort to say: "Liberals care about women, children, minorities, working Americans, and the poor. Conservatives are mean-spirited, serve the rich, and don't care about you." If conservatives are to win the political war and become a national majority they have to turn these images around.

As the Left has shown, the idea of justice is a powerful motivator. It will energize the troops and fuel the campaigns that are necessary to win the political war. Conservatives believe in economic opportunity and individual freedom. The core of their ideas is justice for all. If they could make this intelligible to the American electorate, they would make themselves the party of the American people.

Those are the principles. Now let's look at four examples of the ways they work.

The left-wing sound bite that defines conservatives as mean-spirited fat cats and enemies of the poor is "Tax breaks for the wealthy on the backs of the poor." This is a gross misportrayal of conservative aims, but it has been imprinted on the electorate through a million repetitions.

What is the corresponding chant on the right? There is none. Thus, the first new weapon conservatives need is a sound bite that neutralizes this attack and defines the Left in the process.

Here's a suggestion: "Taxes for bureaucrats out of the pockets of the people." It pretty well sums up what liberal policies are all about. If the trillions spent by the welfare state went to poor people instead of to bureaucrats, there would be no poor people.

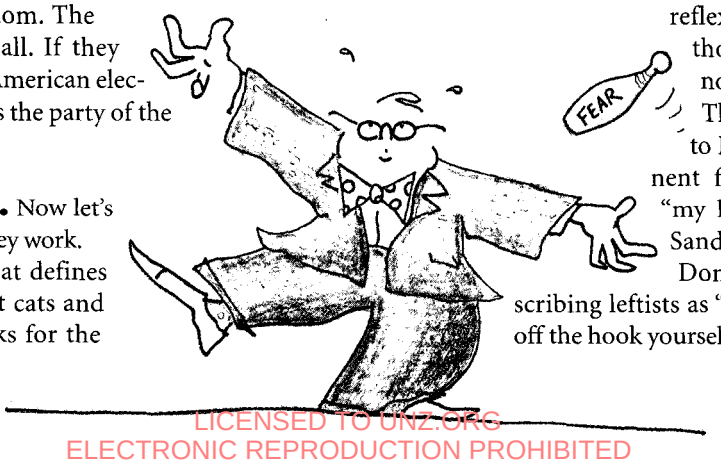
Conservatives in Congress should label their bills with language that gives them an advantage. Unfortunately, they usually don't pay enough attention to political details like this. Take the failed "Education Savings Bill." Its very name projects an image that fits the liberals' negative stereotype of conservatives as mean-spirited accountants. An "Education Savings Bill" sounds like something stingy people would dream up; it sounds like "Let's spend less on education."

In labeling their proposal, conservatives did the liberals' work for them. Wealthy people don't need a tax break to send their children to private school. Working Americans do. So why not call this legislation the "Working Americans' Education Bill"?

And why not remind voters every chance you get that it's well-heeled liberal legislators who send their own kids to private schools while denying working Americans and the poor the same privilege. Conservatives complain that liberals are using the politics of "class warfare" against them. But liberals will use class warfare as long as it works. The only way to stop them is to turn it against them. Taxes for bureaucrats out of the pockets of the people. Current policies mean private schools for liberal elites and educational squalor for working Americans. That's a voter-seeking missile.

Issues and bills are not the only things that can be labeled to positive effect. There is a large socialist wing in American politics today (although few would identify themselves as such). Conservatives ought to be using a more accurate label for liberals: Leftists. Though conservatives are regularly identified as right wingers, almost nobody calls liberals leftists or left wingers. Even conservatives call them "liberals" rather than leftists. But "liberal" is a word whose root is "liberty," not "government control," which is what liberals want.

Conservatives should make "Left," "Radical Left," and "Far Left" reflexive labels for describing those who belong to what is now blandly called liberalism. They should practice referring to Maxine Waters as "my opponent from the far Left," and to "my left-wing colleagues Bernie Sanders and Barney Frank." Don't blame the media for describing leftists as "liberals" while letting them off the hook yourself.



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For a second example of the six political principles in action, consider the political destruction of Newt Gingrich by his opponents in Congress. This was a classic example of successful political warfare. It had nothing to do with intellectual argument or philosophical correctness. It was an illustration of Lenin's injunction: "In political conflicts, the goal is not to refute your opponent's argument, but to wipe him from the face of the earth." Personal attacks can accomplish this task. That's why liberals invented sexual McCarthyism to destroy Robert Bork and Clarence Thomas. That's why liberals call their opponents mean-spirited and racist. If people think you are a bad person, they will not listen to what you have to say about anything at all.

Gingrich was targeted as someone who had to be politically destroyed. "Newt is the nerve center and the energy source," explained a Democratic strategist who understands political warfare. "Going after him is like taking out command and control."

It was the liberals' goal to cripple Gingrich, to kill him in political terms, so he could not return to the battlefield to fight them again. The centerpiece of their attack was an Ethics Committee campaign against his teaching and publishing projects. Left-wing opponents eventually lodged 74 separate charges, 65 of which were immediately laughed out of committee.

The number itself is significant. This was a case of "show me the man and I'll find you the crime." Some of the slanders inevitably stuck to the target. This steadily weakened the Speaker, making it harder for him to defend himself. A normally aggressive leader was kept off balance and on the defensive. Eventually, the conservatives on the Ethics Committee caved in, and Gingrich was forced to concede one frivolous charge. But one was enough.

What should the conservatives have done? They should have remembered they were in a war. They should have responded in kind to a blatant attempt to destroy their leader. Instead of standing around and watching him be pecked to death, they should have created a war room and a plan to fight back. The day Democratic Whip David Bonior (a charter member of his party's militant Left) filed his first charge against Gingrich, the conservatives should have filed their first charge against Bonior. And then they should have filed charge for charge until the liberals gave up their attack.

This is exactly the way liberals neutralized the investigation of Clinton. They attacked the Special Prosecutor and put him on the defensive. They attacked him until every word and every charge he made became automatically suspect in the eyes of the people. Their attack strategy was the political equivalent of an anti-missile missile defense.

If conservatives had fought with half the tenacity to defend an innocent leader that liberals did to defend a guilty President, the political landscape today would be dramatically different.

Example three: The November 1998 elections in California. These were an unmitigated disaster for conservatives, a defeat unparalleled since the 1930s. The Republican gubernatorial candidate lost to his opponent by 20 points, taking down virtually the entire conservative slate.

In the Hispanic community, the results were even worse. Hispanic distrust of conservatives in California had been deepened over two elections by a pair of anti-illegal immigrant campaigns. As a result, the Republican gubernatorial candidate got only 17-23 percent of the Hispanic vote (depending on the exit poll). This disastrous showing was in spite of the fact that the Republicans ran more Hispanic candidates than the Democrats did, and in spite of the fact that the Republican gubernatorial candidate made an extra effort in the Hispanic community, including a television ad campaign on Spanish-language TV.

Five months earlier, however, in the same state, the results for a controversial conservative-backed ballot initiative affecting Hispanics were exactly the reverse. The victorious initiative to end bilingual education was opposed by every major newspaper and establishment figure in the state, by the chairmen of both the Republican and Democratic parties, and by the Republican candidate for governor. The sponsors were able to raise only $1.5 million for the anti-bilingual campaign, and were unable to finance a single television ad. Meanwhile, defenders of bilingualism spent $4.8 million to finance a strong TV ad campaign.

Despite these obstacles, the anti-bilingual campaign won a landslide victory, with 61 percent of the public voting for it. The measure even received 35 percent of the Hispanic vote.

How could this happen? The answer is that the sponsors followed the principles of political warfare, especially the most basic: They defined themselves as friends of Hispanic children who were trying to learn English and better their lives. They thereby won the sympathy and support not only of Hispanics who wanted their children to have a chance in life, but all those people who saw immigrant children as society's underdogs deserving a fair shake.

There are many arguments that can be made for teaching Hispanics English. The survival of the nation is one. Bilingualism could legitimately be seen as a threat to national unity. Canada is a ready example of what can happen to a country with more than one official language. But such a positioning of the initiative would have invited the response that it was anti-immigrant and unfair, and that it would persecute a vulnerable segment of the community (poor immigrant children). This would have played into the hands of the left-wing opposition. Positioned that way, the initiative would have failed.

But once its image as a big helping hand to a disadvantaged group was imprinted in the minds of the California electorate, the result was inevitable. Not even a massive effort to smear its proponents as "racists" could whittle its support below

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60 percent. This is what a strategically sound position on the battlefield can accomplish.

When liberals speak, every other word out of their mouths is "women," "children," "minorities," "working Americans," and "the poor." This immediately organizes the battleground in a way that favors victory for them. Almost all Americans favor underdogs. Americans are tolerant and compassionate. To express concern for vulnerable people is to resonate with Americans' sense of their better selves.

And now we come to the liberals' trump card—the matter of race.

Conservatives have appointed blacks to significant positions. But unlike Democratic appointments, theirs are invisible. Pete Wilson appointed a black former welfare mother to head his welfare department and preside over its reforms. Eloise Anderson is one of the most informed and successful public-policy experts on welfare issues, a tough-minded conservative and a Republican who served on the welfare task forces of Governor Tommy Thompson and Newt Gingrich as well. Think of how powerful Eloise Anderson's voice would be on the social-policy issues that are the key to conservatives winning the confidence of minorities and poor people in California.

But few people have ever heard of Eloise Anderson, including conservatives. Pete Wilson, whose political instincts are normally sharp, kept her existence a virtual secret. He did not give her a public platform to make important policy announcements, or showcase her on television at state events. If a political figure is not on television making important policy announcements, she does not exist.

And so conservatives got no credit—in this case, or in many others—for trying to free poor people and minorities from the oppressions of liberalism and the welfare state.

Politics is about winning elections and implementing programs. Because there is no majority in America that agrees on all the important issues, politics is about forming winning coalitions and holding them together. It is about getting people who disagree with each other to form an alliance to make things happen. In short, it is about compromise. The art of politics is to know how to get your principles implemented without compromising them too much.

Ronald Reagan was a famous compromiser. Throughout his administration he allowed deficits that no conservative in good conscience could justify. He did so because his choices were limited by political realities.

Reagan's priorities were tax cuts and winning the Cold War. He gave the liberals their spending programs in order to get them to agree to a radical reduction in marginal tax rates and a dramatic increase in the military budget. He gave one negative (deficits) to get two positives (prosperity and peace). He compromised principle but for a greater good.

The problem of political purism is always with us. The reason is that many people confuse politics and religion. Politics is the art of the possible. Religion is the pursuit of an ideal. In religious matters, integrity of principle is not only an advantage, it is the goal itself. Religion is not about getting tax cuts or building schools. It is about saving souls. Being virtuous and right, having integrity and standing on principle are the very essence of its agendas. You can't compromise with the devil and expect to get to heaven. In politics, on the other hand, pacts with the devil are made all the time, and on both sides of the political aisle.

Oddly enough, this can be regarded as a healthy development. The 20th century is littered with the corpses of people who got in the way of politicians—Hitler, Lenin, Pol Pot—who thought they were on a religious mission of social redemption. The appropriate places for making people moral and good are churches and synagogues and mosques, not statehouses or congressional hearing rooms.

Many conservatives want to have it both ways. They think that by being morally correct, conservatives can win. In fact, they think that's the *only* way conservatives can win. The problem, they say, is a "loss of backbone"—by which they mean the failure to stand up for conservative principles.

We can agree that political squishiness has been a serious problem for conservatives during the Clinton years. We can also agree that being on the defensive generally means losing the political war. Where we may differ is on whether this defensiveness is the result of lack of principle or a lack of confidence in facing the enemy. In my view, conservatives blink not because they lack principle, but because they are convinced the firepower of the Left is superior to their own.

If current Republicans were naturally squishy, there would have been no "Contract With America." The House conservatives became squishy after the disaster of 1995, when they were outgunned by the White House and knocked on their rear ends. Only two years later, however, they showed they could stand up for principle when they impeached the President, even though in the end they failed to remove him.

The House conservatives disregarded Clinton's 70 percent poll ratings because they were committed to defend the constitutional process. Yet Clinton was able to survive a year that no other politician could have, because of his mastery of political combat. (Being a pathological liar and a borderline sociopath didn't hurt either.) Clinton's bulletproof political character naturally made conservatives cautious again.

Look at Clinton and ask yourself: How does he do it? How does he boff an intern in the White House, perjure himself before a grand jury, lie to the American people, and prevail in political combat at the same time? The answer is the children. The answer is the blacks. The answer is the poor. It's the Democratic version of wrapping yourself in the American flag. Like every successful Democrat, Clinton wraps himself in the flag of the "dispossessed." He says: "However badly you think of me, I'm all that stands between women, children, minorities, and the poor and those mean-spirited conservatives, who are probably racists as well." Until the Republican Party takes this weapon out of the Democratic arsenal, conservatives are doomed to long-term defeat. If Republicans don't convince the American people they care, conservatives will only win when liberals screw up.

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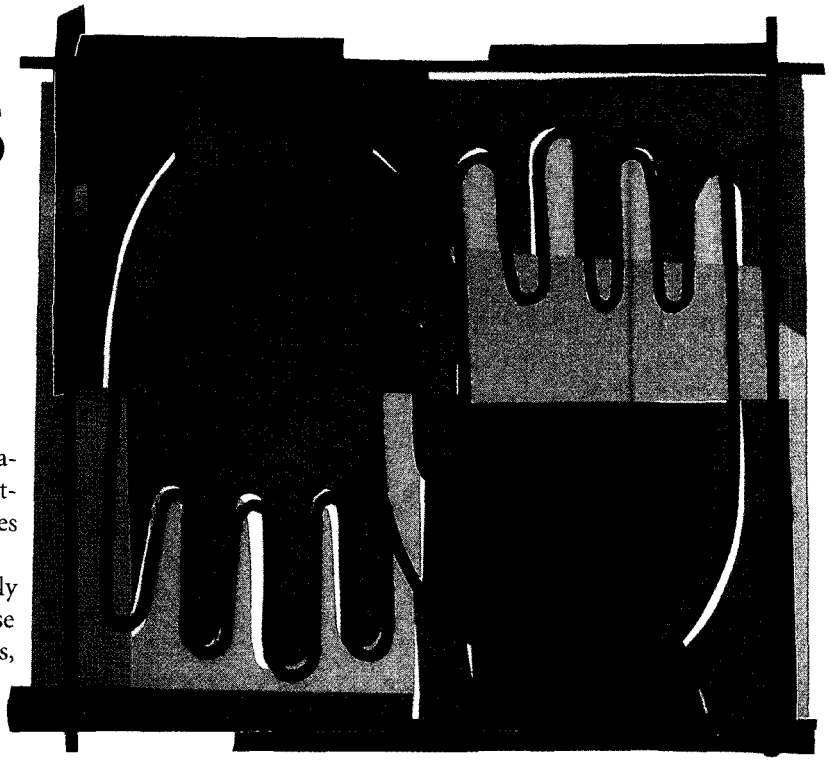
The Right Way for Republicans to Handle Ethnicity in Politics

By Ron Unz



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AFFIRMATIVE ACTION. Immigration. Bilingual education. Over the past few years, these issues and broader matters of ethnic politics have become the stuff of nightmares for Republican candidates around the country.

On the one hand, ethnic issues are tremendously important to the future well-being of our large and diverse society. They are the hottest of hot buttons for many voters, and several ballot measures on ethnicity-related social problems have turned out to be immensely popular—for instance, Proposition 187 (eliminating public services to illegal immigrants), Prop. 209 (ending affirmative action), and Prop. 227 (dismantling bilingual education), which all won huge victories in vote-rich California. An anti-affirmative action measure did even better in Washington State, and additional referenda on these topics are coming in other states.

Yet these same ethnic issues—including the popular ballot measures mentioned above—are widely believed to have created disastrous problems for the Republican Party by scaring away minority voters and leaving Republicans with a harshly negative image. With the elite national media always quick to espy bigotry when Republicans talk about race and ethnicity, many conservative politicians have recently decided to avoid these issues altogether.

Attempts to bridge the chasm between conservative activists and minority voters have recently caused many prominent Republicans to stammer their way through terminological contortions aimed at avoiding controversy. Thus, presidential candidate George W. Bush may oppose "quotas" and have his doubts about "affirmative action," but he is all for "affirmative access." Governor Bush has similarly announced his support for those bilingual education programs "which work." To most voters, minority or otherwise, these rhetorical flourishes are merely platitudes. Such content-free symbolism may lessen a candidate's vulnerability, but it eliminates any possibility of developing a mandate on these critical subjects. Such a stance is merely a polite means of saying "no comment."

The conservative tendency to confront these issues on a case-by-case basis, with no overarching framework or broader social vision, further courts disaster. Attacks on prevailing policies seem scattershot, politically opportunistic, and purely negative in tone. Liberal critics are quick to respond, "But what do you offer instead?"

The solution to these political obstacles is a broad social vision which connects various controversial policies in an old and accepted framework easily understood by all: the melting pot. For most of the last century, assimilation and the ethnic melting pot were regarded as fundamental aspects of the American experience, promoted by liberals and conservatives alike. Returning national policies to the principles of the melting pot should become the primary Republican goal on ethnic issues.

A "NEW AMERICAN MELTING POT" would not be a cartoonish one-way street of forced integration into the dominant white culture, as "multicultural" activists charge. Over the past couple of centuries, America's mainstream culture has widely diverged from its original Anglo-Saxon heritage through the ad-

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mixture of foreign elements. Our language, our cuisine, our high and popular cultures contain important elements from the Germans, Italians, Slavs, Jews, blacks, Asians, and others who today compose well over half our national population. American assimilation has always been a two-way street.

Assimilation is also variable in its speed and extent. A Chinese-born Stanford Ph.D. in engineering with a job in Silicon Valley and a house in the suburbs is likely to assimilate much more rapidly than a poorly educated Chinese immigrant living and working as a short-order cook in a Chinatown. But for most of our history, thorough assimilation into the mainstream has been a process taking generations rather than years, and alarmists concerned about today's ethnic and language enclaves of Mexicans or Chinese should recognize that similar enclaves of Italian Americans or Jewish Americans dominated the New York City landscape for generations following their arrival.

Today, the American melting pot is both far stronger and far weaker than it has ever been before.

Today, the American melting pot is both far stronger and far weaker than it has ever been before. The reality of assimilation has grown with the rise of electronic media and America's ubiquitous English-language popular culture, which now dominates the world. A recent study by the National Immigration Forum indicates that over half of U.S. immigrants already spoke English "well" or "very well" upon their arrival, and after ten years of residency, that figure climbs to more than three-quarters. The vast majority of third-generation Asians and Latinos speak only English at home.

Cultural and economic assimilation are also quite rapid. Today, a quarter or more of Hispanics have shifted from their traditional Catholic faith to Protestant evangelical churches, a religious transformation of unprecedented speed, and one obviously connected partly to their absorption into American society. And more than 70 percent of foreign immigrants have achieved the middle-class distinction of becoming homeowners within 30 years of their entry into America.

The strongest measure of assimilation—intermarriage across ethnic lines—illustrates today's assimilationist reality. As late as the 1960s, intermarriage rates for white ethnic groups such as Jews and Italians were as low as 5 percent or less. But today, not only Jews and Italians but also American-born Asians and Latinos marry outside their ethnicity in a third to a half of all cases. By most measures, the assimilation of Asian and Latino immigrants is proceeding far more rapidly than that of white immigrant groups who arrived early in the twentieth century. Thus in California the number of "multiracial" births recently passed the combined total of black and Asian births.

Yet at the same time that the reality of the melting pot has grown, the ideology behind it—even the very term itself—has been driven out of public discourse. Today, the contrary concepts of "maintaining diversity" and "fostering multiculturalism" are the purported goals of liberal elites in universities, the news media, and elsewhere. Leaders of ethnic advocacy groups are assumed to be speaking on behalf of millions of their co-ethnics, and the Democratic Party chooses its convention delegates based on strict ethnic and racial criteria. American assimilation has become the powerful reality that dare not speak its name.

HOW WOULD A REVIVED "melting pot" principle apply to some of the difficult ethnic issues in politics today?

First and foremost, our public schools and educational institutions must be restored as the engines of assimilation they once were. America is now in the midst of one of its largest immigration waves, bringing to dwell among us millions of foreign-born or first-generation arrivals who lack good knowledge of English or of our historical traditions and national institutions. Our schools once met similar situations by teaching English to students as rapidly as possible, together with the civics lessons and American history which turned Italian or Polish children into good Americans. Today, schools often do not, and instead keep millions of immigrant students in native-language programs in which barely a word of English is used—sometimes for many years. In history and social studies classrooms, "multicultural education" is now widespread, placing an extreme and unrealistic emphasis on ethnic diversity instead of passing on the traditional knowledge of Western civilization, our Founding Fathers, and the Civil and World Wars.

Although changing an entire educational curriculum is difficult, requiring nearly all children to be taught to read, write, and speak English as soon as they enter school is legally easy and enormously popular. In 1998, California's Proposition 227 passed in a landslide despite facing the united opposition of both the Democratic and Republican Party establishments and being outspent some 25-1 in advertising; it ran 20 to 30 points ahead of Republican candidates among blacks, Asians, and Latinos. Results since the election have proven the people right and the party establishments wrong, as test scores of the students who moved into English immersion classes have risen 20, 40, or even 100 percent compared to similar students who remained in bilingual programs, all after less than one year of the new curriculum.

Public opinion surveys on requiring English in the schools are also quite remarkable. More than three-quarters of likely voters support federal legislation "which would require all public school instruction to be conducted in English, and for students not fluent in English to be placed in an intensive one-year English immersion program," according to Zogby polls. Support is overwhelming across all geographical, ethnic, political, and even ideological lines. Yet despite this near unanimity of opinion, government policy has been (and, except in California, remains) completely contrary.

Similarly, current public school curricula which glorify obscure ethnic figures at the expense of the giants of American history have no place in a melting pot framework. Multicultural-

Physicist, turned software entrepreneur, turned political activist Ron Unz organized California's successful 1998 ballot initiative that rolled back bilingual education.

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ist ideology, which claims that Asian students can only identify with Asian heroes, black students only with black heroes, and so forth, is not only demeaning and divisive, it is also false. Earlier this century, children of Jewish and Italian families, who entered school with scant knowledge of American culture and often barely even speaking the language, soon saw themselves as just as much the political inheritors of George Washington as Americans whose ancestors had arrived on the *Mayflower*. Black leaders such as W. E. B. DuBois believed they had as much claim to the legacy of Western civilization and American government as any white citizen. Individual families must remain free to preserve as much—or as little—of their own traditional ethnic heritage and culture as they desire, but our public schools should provide a single, unifying American culture rather than encouraging ethnic fragmentation. Today's immigrants deserve such support.

Asian and Latino immigrants are assimilating far more rapidly than earlier white immigrant groups.

OUR CURRENT SYSTEM of affirmative action—preferences based on race or ethnicity—also becomes completely indefensible under a melting pot analysis. Given current high intermarriage rates, even classifying a particular individual ethnically can be almost impossible. Consider a child whose four grandparents are Asian, Hispanic, Armenian, and Italian—the kind of mix growing ever more common. At the University of California at Los Angeles, Asians and Armenians are over-represented, while Hispanics and Italians are underrepresented. So should our hypothetical child be given a boost or held back? And who should decide this?

Furthermore, the broad ethnic categories on which affirmative action is based—such as "Asian" and "Hispanic"—are meaningless. Chinese and Hmong have almost nothing in common, with the former being massively over-represented in elite institutions and the latter massively underrepresented. Most Cuban Americans are well-to-do, while most Puerto Ricans are poor; why grant them both preferences on racial grounds? And by what absurd logic does the son of an affluent, blond, third-generation Argentinean American not speaking a word of Spanish (or the child of a black millionaire living in Beverly Hills) end up categorized as a "disadvantaged minority"?

The obvious solution to all these obvious contradictions is to replace ethnically based affirmative action with special assistance based on socio-economic factors. To the extent that some ethnic groups such as blacks or Hispanics are disproportionately among the poor or the poorly educated, they would disproportionately benefit from such programs, but poor whites or Asians would receive help as well. Programs and benefits aimed at the disadvantaged must use objective criteria such as poverty or lack of education, not skin color.

Besides being far more just and workable than our ethnically based spoils system, such a colorblind approach would demonstrate the commitment of Republicans to enhancing opportunities for the truly poor, while today's system sets aside admissions quotas and business contracts for the country-club members of favored races. Poor whites and poor Asians who now overwhelmingly vote Democratic might have a new reason to consider the Republican Party. There would also be better targeted help for poor blacks and Hispanics, since the benefits of current affirmative action set-asides are mostly scooped up by more affluent and privileged members of those groups (which is why the minority-group establishment fights so hard to preserve the status quo).

A strong and forthright stand in favor of assimilation should be combined with an equally strong and forthright stand in favor of beneficial immigration. Under an assimilationist framework which supports and expects integration into American society, many public concerns about immigration will disappear. Then it becomes possible to be pro-immigrant in a way that will reassure Asians, Hispanics, and others who have sometimes felt under attack.

GOOD POLICIES MUST ALSO BE good politics in order to have a chance of becoming a reality. How would an assimilationist agenda play in the political arena?

Thanks to today's trendy multiculturalist status quo, promoting assimilationism will generate considerable controversy. Left-wing academic and media elites regard "the melting pot" as fighting words. But such controversy can be extremely useful, since harsh attacks by ardent multiculturalists will be off-putting to most voters. And the wide media coverage generated in the process will help attract public interest and ultimately a mandate for change. A sensible and sensitive call for assimilation will defuse most potential opposition, leaving the loudest contrary voices—diehard supporters of ebonics and Spanish-only instruction—isolated as extremists. Half of winning a victory is picking the right enemies, and these could not be better.

On the other hand, any attempt by Clintonized Democrats to co-opt assimilationism or borrow its language while ignoring its substance would be very difficult, if not impossible, given the vehemence of the multiculturalist Left. While nearly 80 percent of ordinary Democrats support ideas like requiring the public schools to teach English, many left-wing activists will fight to the last ditch against this, and denounce as a traitor any Democrat leaning in that direction. Liberals will face a desperate choice between numbers and intensity, and lose either way.

As for the minorities and immigrants who are the principal subjects of the melting pot agenda, few votes will be lost and perhaps many will be gained. Although Asians are a tiny fraction of today's electorate, within a generation their growing numbers, wealth, and presence in elite institutions will give them influence similar to that of American Jews. And Asians are among the most assimilable of American groups, with an enormous emphasis on learning English and intermarriage rates often at 50 percent or above. Asians will also benefit most from the end of racial preferences in academic institutions. A pro-immigrant, pro-assimilationist agenda is almost tailor-made for winning Asian support.

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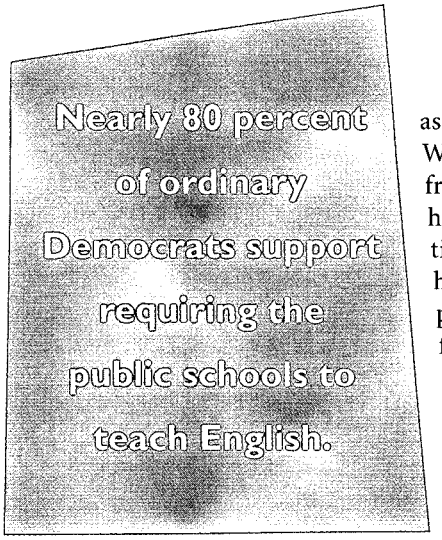

And contrary to some misperceptions, America's huge and rapidly growing Hispanic population should also be receptive. Although a small core of Hispanic activists (many of whom are native-born and speak not a word of Spanish) are in the forefront of the multiculturalist and bilingual camps, their views have little relation to their alleged followers, who support English in the schools in landslide numbers. The improved school results among Hispanic children now resulting from the rollback of bilingual education will marginalize these activists, and destroy their remaining credibility. What ambitious Hispanic politician will dare to oppose an educational reform that has a demonstrated possibility of eventually *doubling* the academic performance of his constituents' children?

Though the concept of the melting pot may grate on cultural leftists of all ethnicities, it actually resonates deeply with most Hispanics, Mexicans in particular. Unlike Chinese, Koreans, or Japanese, who come from effectively mono-ethnic societies with few assimilationist traditions, Hispanics recognize themselves as a fusion of European and Indian cultures. The very common term *mestizo*—meaning "mixed"—is the self-description of most Hispanic immigrants. It is no coincidence that when *Time* devoted an issue to American ethnic trends, the attractive face on the cover—a computer-generated composite of hundreds of actual Americans of every race and ethnicity—looked very Hispanic. The "melting pot" is as Hispanic as rice and beans.

An assimilationist approach might also attract surprising support from traditional liberals (especially Jews) who have a history of stressing common bonds among the races. It was Kennedy acolyte Arthur Schlesinger Jr. who published one of the earliest forceful attacks against multiculturalism, *The Disuniting of America*. National polls show Jewish opposition to bilingual education running at close to 90 percent. Individuals who themselves learned English as children, or whose parents did so, often have even stronger feelings on this issue than citizens several generations removed from the immigrant experience.

Similarly, replacing race-based preferences with new assistance based on socio-economic status could peel supporters away from the Left. In many respects, the policies now advocated by multiculturalists are closer to the ideas advocated by racialist reactionaries in the 1920s and '30s than to any truly progressive policy. Public support for a melting pot alternative could attract a principled core of traditional liberals who would provide tremendous credibility for an assimilationist push. The power of this issue might, for instance, help raise Jewish support for Republicans from the negligible 15 percent or so at which it has long been stuck.

Using these issues to raise black support for Republicans—also generally around 15 percent—is far less likely. Blacks, especially those living in immigrant-rich cities, are vehement foes of bilingual education, which provides an opening to them, but that is not enough to overcome the drag of the other assimilationist policies proposed here. Whereas an older generation of black leaders from DuBois to Martin Luther King would have had grave doubts about affirmative action, and rejected multiculturalism out of hand, a considerable number of today's most prominent blacks are explicit separatists, and finding a popular black leader who opposes ethnic preferences is almost impossible (even leading black Republicans such as Colin Powell and J. C. Watts won't break with affirmative action).

Further, intermarriage rates between blacks and other groups are minute compared to those for Asians or Hispanics, and there is considerable sentiment that blacks whose spouses are of a different ethnicity have betrayed their community in some way (similar sentiments are sometimes expressed by Jewish activists toward Jewish intermarriage, but those rates are now over 50 percent and the issue is more of a religious one). Since middle-class blacks are disproportionately employed in the public sector or in large corporations—places where affirmative action policies have the greatest influence on career advancement—there is obviously a strong personal as well as ideological stake in maintaining race-conscious policies. Nonetheless, with so few blacks supporting Republicans now, a sincere and principled assimilationist approach could hardly do worse than today's Republican silence and squishiness.

UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF Bill Clinton, American elections have recently turned to the small and the symbolic—urging school uniforms, for instance, or allocating 0.01 percent of the federal budget to some high visibility program better left to the states anyway. Such a political strategy cuts risks, and Republican candidates and office-holders, eyeing Clinton's success, seem to be following a similar path. But while such micro-politics may be successful against other micro-politicians, it would have little chance against a campaign centered on a sincere and widely popular Big Idea.

Assimilation can be that Big Idea for Republicans. It represents a powerful, positive vision, a clear solution to some of America's most intractable and controversial problems, appealing across ideological and partisan lines. A spirited campaign to revive the melting pot would encounter heated opposition, but that opposition would be shrill and extremist, and the attention drawn in the process would be a good thing politically. Although many rank-and-file Democrats and liberals would be attracted to the concept, a hard core of activist opposition would prevent Democratic candidates from easily stealing the issue.

Unifying our increasingly multiethnic society is a project of the highest importance. Large political rewards will flow to those with the courage to move us in that direction. As a Republican, I hope that the courage and wit necessary may be found somewhere within the leadership of my own party.

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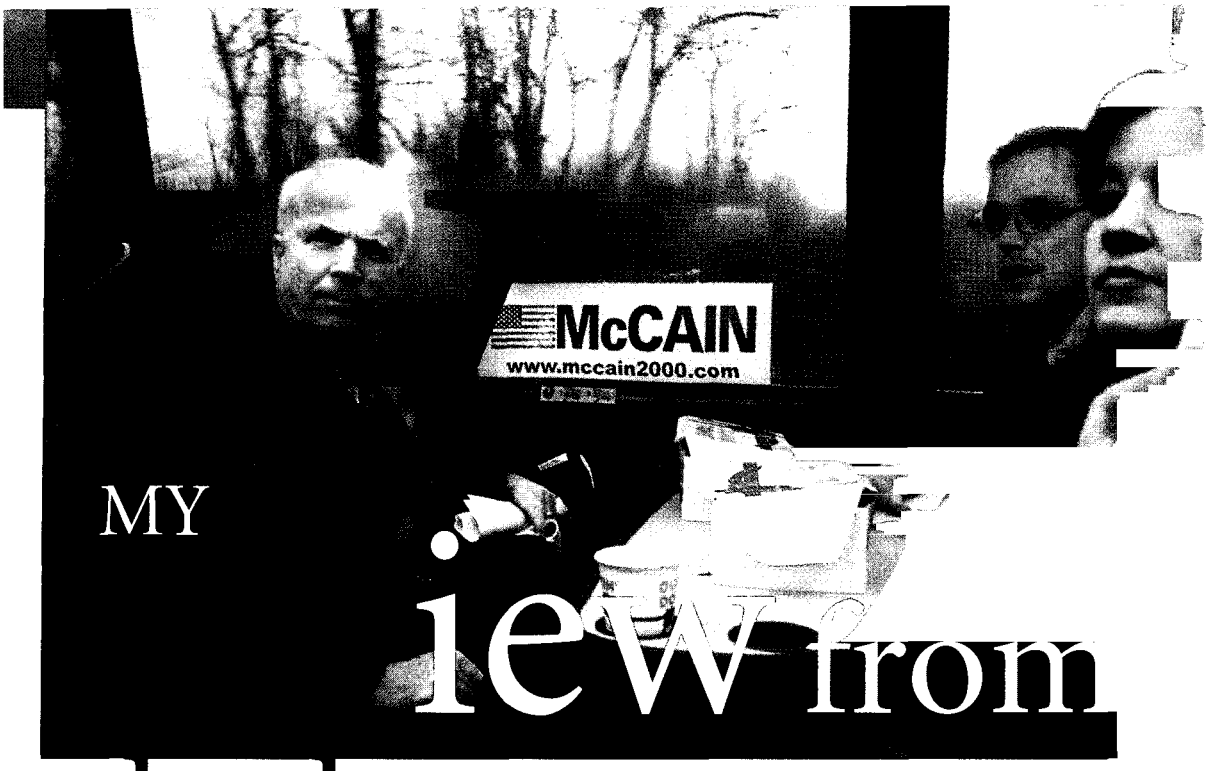

Kevin Hassett with John McCain and another adviser.

MY View from the bus

A First–time Presidential Campaign Adviser Describes How Candidate Policy Gets Made

BY KEVIN HASSETT

The "Straight Talk Express" is a customized bus that John McCain uses to move from place to place during his campaign. It has two sitting areas—one in front and one in back—filled with cushy benches and easy chairs. In between are a toilet, a shower, and a little kitchen that is stocked with Diet Coke and the largest bag of Gummi Bears I have ever seen. I took my first ride in early January.

McCain usually sits in the back, surrounded by reporters. Campaign staffers, armed with satellite-linked laptops and constantly buzzing cell phones, usually collect in the front, where there is some hope, at least, of having a conversation that will not be examined by reporters.

For my first ride on the bus we were headed outside Manchester, where the Senator was going to give a speech that laid out the details of his tax plan. As one of the authors of the plan, I was traveling along to make sure the Senator was fully briefed about its nuances.

Knowing how much scrutiny the tax plan would face when it became public, I had the odd sensation that I'd been transported into a landing craft lurching toward Omaha Beach, wondering what might happen when the armored door flopped down and we had to charge the shore. In such situations your past flashes before your eyes, and I can remember thinking "how did I end up on this bus?"

Well, it all started in the early summer of 1999, when I headed uptown to chat with Senator McCain about economics. He wanted to learn more about tax policy, and invited me to tutor him on current thinking in the academic tax literature.

Our first conversation quickly turned to a key question: What should we do with the budget surpluses rolling into Washington? After laying out all the options, we decided that the top priority should be to repair the big Social Security and Medicare imbalances once and for all, but to do so with a conservative reform. Shortly after that conversation, the Senator asked me to head up his economic team. Impressed as I was with McCain it was easy to accept the challenge, even if he was at 2 percent in the polls with a 4 percent margin of error.

If you have images of campaign advisers lolling around the pool at the candidate's house discussing great things, then you have the wrong idea about advising. Politicians in power develop major policy proposals with the help of a small army of career professionals who have access to astonishingly complex computer models designed to give precise answers about the costs of specific proposals. When you write a policy pro-

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posal for a campaign, the quality expectations are just as high, but no such professional staff is available. The main job of an adviser, after the broad outlines of the policy are agreed to, is to make sure the plan is well crafted, priced-out correctly, and fairly and accurately compared to your opponents' plans—all with a skeleton crew. You are Scotty from Star Trek, being asked to do the impossible with duct tape and improvised solutions.

AN ADVISER PROBABLY CAN'T WIN A CAMPAIGN FOR A CANDIDATE, BUT HE SURE CAN LOSE IT.

An adviser probably can't win a campaign for a candidate, but he sure can lose it: The numbers better be right. If they are not, the headline in the *New York Times* the day after the plan is released will be "Reform Plan Doesn't Add Up," or perhaps "Idiot Economist Derails McCain Campaign," or "Hassett's Mother-in-Law Was Right All Along."

Costas Azariadis, one of my favorite professors in graduate school, once gave me a lecture on how you get very complicated tasks done right. There is no use, he said, checking your work line by line. The only way you can be confident that something is correct is if you independently reproduce it. He suggested that be done in two ways. First, after you have solved a problem, put it away for a few weeks, and then start it all over again from scratch. If, after having forgotten what you did the first time, you get the same answer, then there's a good chance you have the right solution, since mistakes seldom reproduce themselves exactly. Second, get a research assistant to solve the problem as well, giving as little direction as possible. If the assistant gets your answer, you're probably O.K.

These rules guided us as we priced out our plan. Ph.D. economists checked things independently. When we all agreed, we had staffers recheck calculations. When that was done, we hired an independent consulting firm to check them one more time.

Even then, we were not done. As our tax memo neared completion, we offered a bottle of Bordeaux to any campaign staffer who could find a number out of place. One did.

In the end, we had a product we were proud of. As complicated as economics is, though, you can never be sure your product is airtight until it withstands the withering fire of the opposition. Which brings me back to the bus.

As we rolled toward the speech, I got a frantic phone call. As a last and final check, we had hired two professional tax preparers to go over our examples. (A family of four with an income of $40,000 saves this much under our plan, but that much under Governor Bush's....) The preparers finally returned their calculations to the team at campaign headquarters, but some of the numbers were different than the ones in our tax document. The preparers could not be reached, and with little time left we had to make a decision: Whose numbers do we use?

Thinking back to the bottle of Lynch-Bages sitting at headquarters, we decided to trust our own figures. The preparers, after all, had never studied under Costas.

The Senator gave his speech, we released our plan, and everything went better than could have been expected. The press immediately glimpsed the key differences between the Bush and McCain plans, and voters seemed to prefer our alternative. In the days to come, a blizzard of counterattacks were all parried, and after we asked them to check their work for mistakes, the hired tax preparers even came back with numbers that matched ours.

In January 2000 I got less sleep than I did when my son was a newborn. I lived off caffeine, pizza, and adrenaline. Nerdy tricks learned in graduate school became my stock in trade. But for a ride on the Straight Talk Express it was all worth it.

When he's not advising John McCain, TAE *contributing writer Kevin Hassett is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute.*

LAWYERS continued from page 45

consumers and regulate businesses. And he can do all this without elections. "You don't need a legislative majority to file a lawsuit," observes another lawyer happily.

Britain's *The Economist* scorns "this unjustified recourse to the courts, unique in the world." Though the magazine supports gun control, it is appalled at the way decisions on that controversial issue are being removed from legislatures and placed in courts, as states sue gun manufacturers just as they sued tobacco companies. "If legal extortion comes to replace the democratic process," *The Economist* predicts, "everyone will suffer." The subject "will become as bitterly polarized as abortion, and just as incapable of resolution through debate or compromise."

Even some left-wing politicians are disturbed at the idea of a few lawyers ruling the rest of us. Robert Reich, for example, a former Labor Secretary for Bill Clinton, told the *Wall Street Journal* he "worries that judges lack the expertise to superintend entire industries, and that cases are settled without a close look at the fate of alleged victims."

For greedy shysters and power-hungry ideologues, mass litigation has become an explosive money machine. Until their legal tactics are reined in, tort lawyers have a massive incentive to continue their end-run around the democratic process. They will end up terrorizing and ruling over other businesses, accumulating more power than John D. Rockefeller ever dreamt of, while making themselves rich in the process. Only a vigorous counterstrike in Congress will stop them.

Texas Governor George W. Bush, now running for President, has had some success rolling back tort attacks in his state. Which explains why Morton Kondracke sees the likely Bush-Gore race as an "Armageddon for trial lawyers." Kondracke says the issue "will be huge" in 2000, "with the nation's trial lawyers spending vast sums to defeat their nemesis" Bush.

One thing is certain: If trial lawyers keep winning, their political contributions and payoffs will get bigger and bigger, and elections will mean less and less. As Stuart Taylor puts it, we are seeing the rule of law "morph" into the rule of lawyers.

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By Bill Kauffman

Dry Quixote

Prohibitionist Earl Dodge Makes His Fifth Run for the White House

In a fourth-floor room of the Bucks County Sheraton in Langhorne, Pennsylvania, perennial Prohibition Party presidential candidate Earl Dodge serenades me, in church-choir baritone, with his party's theme song:

> I'd rather be right than president
> I want my conscience clear
> I'll firmly stand for truth and right
> I have a God to fear
> I'll work and vote the way I pray
> No matter what the scoffers say
> I'd rather be right than president
> I want my conscience clear

If the great third parties and their tribunes—the Socialists of Eugene Debs, Bob La Follette's Progressives, George Wallace and the American Independence Party—are gone but not forgotten, the Prohibition Party is forgotten but not gone. Yet despite the party's present obscurity, its 67-year-old embodiment, Earl Dodge, is running once more. "I could be called the moral Harold Stassen," he jokes.

Founded in 1869, the Prohibitionists are the oldest third-party in American politics. The party elected two congressmen and a governor of Florida early in this century; its high-water mark in presidential campaigns came in 1892, when reformed vintner General John Bidwell, having spurned the "drunkard-making business," won 271,058 votes, or about 250,000 more votes than Earl Dodge has received in four previous runs for the White House. No Prohibitionist has won election to local office since 1978 in the township of Lee in Maine (which was the first state to go dry, in 1851).

There is a charmingly anachronistic cast to Dodge and his party; the 18th Amendment was repealed almost 70 years ago, but the party continues to demand "the prohibition of the manufacturing, distribution, and sale of all alcoholic beverages." They are still at it, a dwindling band of temperate ladies and male Sunday-school teachers in the only political party to address the question, "What About Those Bible Wines?" (Answer: They were probably grape juice.)

The indefatigable Earl Dodge is not delusive. "If I get to the White House it'll be on a public guided tour," he acknowledges. So why run? "It's important for people to have the right to vote for what they believe in. Everybody is going to be accountable to God. When I see God, He's not going to ask me if I belonged to the biggest party, but did I do what I know to be right?"

Earl joined the party in 1952, a Massachusetts teenager disillusioned by the failure of the Republican Party to nominate Robert Taft for president. His early work in a Boston rescue mission "gave me an education on how much damage booze does." The Baptist Dodge attests, "The Lord led me into this work when I was a young man because He knew that I would stick with it." The Lord was right. Earl became a $1 a year party field worker; he, his wife Barbara, and their swelling brood would spend 20 years moving from one prohibition headquarters to the next, living in Indiana, Michigan, California, and Kansas before settling near Denver in 1971.

The Dodges are the first family of temperance; think of them as the anti-Kennedys. Earl is Mr. Prohibition: He is party chairman, editor of its newsletter, and its quadrennial standard-bearer. Barbara runs the computer and mailing list and is one of her husband's electors. Two daughters and one son have run for office; of the seven Dodge children, "a majority vote the ticket." If the kids are not unanimous for dad, well, neither were the Reagans.

Earl has run for office at least 20 times, for everything from Massachusetts Secretary of State to governor of Colorado. He has never won, though he did come within hailing distance of being elected to the Kalamazoo City Commission in 1969.

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Despite his labors in what we had best not call the political vineyards, Dodge has overseen the decline of the party. Whereas a century ago dissenters had easy access to the ballot, the "oppressive election laws" of post-WWII America have forced the Prohibitionists off the ballot in such erstwhile strongholds as Kansas and Alabama. This November, Dodge expects to be on the ballot in Colorado, Utah, Tennessee, Arkansas, Florida, New Jersey, and Mississippi. A vote total of 10,000 would be a windfall. "If you look at this from a cold, calculating political viewpoint, my wife's husband would be a blithering idiot for doing what he's doing," says the candidate. "The only excuse I can give is that I believe in it."

The Dodge campaign consists mostly of interviews with Christian radio stations and small-town newspapers and occasional visits to states with visible supporters. He is in Langhorne not to press the flesh but to exhibit at a political button show. "When I started working for the party all they had was two little pins in a drawer, so I started to build a collection," says Dodge. Thus he has become, poignantly, a party archivist as well; keeper of the dry flame, tender of a tradition that may not survive this recent recipient of a septuple bypass. For although the party has 31 national committee members from 21 states, there is no heir apparent to Earl Dodge. "I pray about that all the time," he says. "I don't know who would do it if I didn't."

Earl Dodge is amiable and garrulous—"my mother said I was vaccinated with a phonograph needle"—even after we establish that I would legalize marijuana and he would criminalize beer. While he is a True Believer, he does not routinely break out the Carrie Nation hatchet or subject stray wets to harangues on the Demon Rum. "Don't drive me to drink!" he jokes with wet friends. And no, he is not a reformed drunk out to scourge the liquid that put him in the gutter: "I've got many faults but I've never had a drink of alcohol in my life."

He defends the 18th Amendment and the resultant 13-year dry spell as "a tremendous success"; he offers "$20,000 to anyone who can show that during prohibition, crime and diseases related to alcohol did not decline."

Dodge concedes that immediate prohibition today is impracticable: "There'd be no point in enacting a law without majority support because you couldn't enforce it, and drinking is an ingrained practice in America." So while "prohibition is the ultimate answer, in the meantime we favor education" and the semi-prohibitionist steps advocated by groups like Mothers Against Drunk Driving. "We are slowly going in the direction of a dry nation," Dodge says confidently. "If I live to 80 or 85, I expect to see some form of prohibition."

Although Dodge doesn't "know of a single person in our party who smokes," the party takes a laissez-faire line on tobacco. "Unless they're blowing smoke in your face, they're not infringing on your rights," he says, whereas alcohol "takes good people and turns them into beasts. Marijuana, LSD, cocaine: All those drugs put together don't hurt a fraction of the people that booze does. The only parties that are honest and consistent on the alcohol-drug issue are the Prohibition Party and the Libertarians. They want to legalize it all; we want to ban it all."

Dodge has a wonderful sense of history, of being part of an eccentrically American tradition. He calls the roll of Prohibitionists past: Isaac Funk published party magazines in addition to the dictionary he put out with Mr. Wagnalls. Grape-juice king Charles Welch ran for governor of New York in 1916 as a Prohibitionist. "Wrong-Way" Corrigan, the directionally challenged pilot who in 1938 aimed for California and wound up in Ireland, was the Prohibition candidate for U.S. Senate in 1946 from California. (He eventually did find his way there.) Astonishingly, the *New Yorker*-Hollywood wit Robert Benchley was a Prohibition activist before settling into a gin and rye haze during the 1920s: A Prohibitionist done in by Prohibition!

The party's symbol has been various: Once the white rose of purity, then the water fountain, then the one-humped camel—until "Camel cigarettes came out," whereupon the smoke-free party added a hump to make it bactrian. "In our office in Denver we collect anything that's a camel," says Dodge. "We even have a small camel whiskey container—empty, of course."

Dodge's fifth nomination did not come without a fight. Meeting last summer in the dry Amish town of Bird-in-Hand, Pennsylvania, the Prohibitionists renominated Dodge over a surprise challenge from a Utahan who wanted to de-emphasize prohibition and play up less outre concerns. (If a century ago the party was progressive—woman suffrage and the income tax were second only to prohibition in its list of demands—today its platform is generally conservative-populist: pro-life, anti-foreign aid, pro-free enterprise, anti-immigration, pro-gun.) The convention chose Dodge by a vote of 9-8; he explains, "A lot of the traditional members were out having a late lunch; they didn't know there was going to be a contest." But even with his allies off at their no-martini lunch, Dodge's defense of tradition carried the day: "If we abandon or play down the booze issue, we don't deserve to exist as a party. We don't deserve to retain the name."

Earl Dodge wants the scoffers to remember something: "Even if people think we're a bunch of nuts, no one in the party has ever stood to make a nickel if what they were working for succeeded." It is this adherence to principle and ingenuous faith in American democracy that makes the Prohibitionists admirable, even to a beer-drinking libertarian. Dodge recalls a story that the wife of a one-time vice presidential candidate told at a convention long ago. "Her uncle grew peaches during a hard time in Kansas. The men were taking the peaches away in the truck, jostling the baskets, and he said, 'Don't do that—you'll bruise the peaches.' 'Don't worry about that,' they said. 'They're going to be crushed for brandy anyway.' He said, 'Not my peaches,' and made them unload them. They sat there and rotted. He took the loss. You had that attitude once in this country: Principle was important. Today people are primarily interested in their retirement benefits and the stock market. There's no other explanation for someone as despicable as Slick Willie being in office."

Earl Dodge "has quite literally given his life to our Party," salutes fellow Prohibitionist James Hedges. He knows that he will never be president. But he thinks he is right, and whether he is or not, his conscience is clear.

Associate Editor Bill Kauffman's books include Every Man a King *and* America First! Its History, Culture, and Politics.

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PRESERVE DEMOCRACY:

Rein in the Lawyers

BY SCOTT WALTER

Another age of robber barons is upon us. But today's plutocrats aren't big businessmen, they're lawyers.

The legal profession has long been plagued with ambulance chasers. In recent years, though, courtroom exploiters of ill-fortune have grown far richer and intruded much further into American society. And what's most disturbing, they have begun to grab dangerous amounts of political power for themselves. Cases like the famous soaking of McDonald's because it sold a woman hot coffee are trifles compared to what trial lawyers are cooking up in their newest politically charged lawsuits against entire industries.

For centuries, common law made it difficult to bring nuisance suits in court. People in the legal profession understood what Abraham Lincoln, himself a successful lawyer, had warned: "Never stir up litigation. A worse man can scarcely be found than one who does this." Common sense said messy lawsuits should be reserved for clear and outrageous wrongs, not used routinely.

About a generation ago, however, a new brand of activist lawyers set out to tear down traditional obstacles to litigation. Claiming they wanted to help little guys who had bought defective products or perhaps suffered some bad doctoring, these litigators forced changes in court rules that made it much easier to sue—and to win money in the process.

Money-minded attorneys found that stirring up trouble paid quite well, and they started chasing more than just ambulances. In the beginning they made their fortunes by gambling on individual plaintiffs whose suits they brought on a contingency basis ("I'll sue the bastards for you, and if we lose you owe nothing; if we win, I'll take a third or half."). Then they graduated to class-action lawsuits, where they could claim to represent thousands of supposed victims (many of whom never even knew that the lawsuit undertaken in their name existed) and try to shake down whole industries.

One of the first of these class-action wars was waged against companies that made asbestos products. At first, it seemed like the lawyers had a reasonable case: Some asbestos manufacturers had recklessly endangered workers and customers, and they deserved to pay for harms committed. But, notes legal analyst Stuart Taylor, greedy lawyers turned the litigation into a "monster" which bankrupted 15 American companies, some of whom "had done little or nothing wrong." Courts were clogged with claims for people who were not sick, and unlikely ever to become sick. Scientific research eventually discounted many of the claimed dangers of asbestos, but the data arrived after many companies had already been destroyed. Worst of all, some genuinely sick people were unable to receive proper compensation, partly because of the billions of dollars being sucked up by a handful of attorneys.

After ravaging the asbestos industry, the legal pirates turned to breast-implant makers, high-tech companies with volatile stock prices, auto makers, credit card issuers, tobacco companies, gun manufacturers, and, most recently, HMOs, biotech companies, computer makers, pharmaceutical firms, and any firm deemed responsible for a Y2K disruption. In the case of breast implants, one company was bankrupted and the industry as a whole forked over $7 billion—a third of which went into lawyers' wallets—even though years of research demonstrate that the implants never caused the diseases claimed. In a more recent class-action case, Texas lawyer Wayne Reaud shook down Toshiba in the name of two laptop-computer owners who charged that their machines just might—though they never actually had—lose data when transferring it to a floppy disk. Fearful of protracted litigation that would give it a bad name, Toshiba charged $1 billion against its 1999 earnings to cover payments to consumers, and promised to deliver $147.5 million into Reaud's pocket.

Faced with the threat of such class-action lawsuits dragging out over years, it's no surprise that some companies decide to collude with the legal blackmailers menacing them. And so companies now often huddle with hostile lawyers and agree to send customers "coupons" good for small discounts or refunds. The lawyers, by contrast, are given fat checks. The companies

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benefit because few of the coupons are ever redeemed (in one case involving ITT Financial Corporation, only 2 out of 96,754 were), and those that are redeemed usually require customers to buy additional goods or services from the company that issues them. The lawyers benefit because they can claim to have helped thousands of customers—even though most of those "victims" never realize anything ever happened—and they can insist their fees be a large percentage of the total face value of the (mostly unused) coupons. Of course, in order to pay those legal fees, the companies just charge their future customers higher prices.

Ask Dexter Kamilewicz, a Maine real estate broker, who really benefits in these cases. He was one of 715,000 consumers supposedly "helped" by class-action king Daniel Edelman of Chicago in a lawsuit against BancBoston. Edelman's lawsuit brought Kamilewicz a $2.19 refund on his account with the bank, which was alleged to have overcharged escrow account customers. Some customers received even less than Kamilewicz; the luckiest ones received a whopping $8.76. Kamilewicz didn't even know of his windfall until he asked the bank why it had charged him $91.33 and was told the money was for—legal fees!

Two years before BancBoston settled with Edelman, the *Wall Street Journal* reports, the bank offered customers the same refund and the lawyers $500,000. But "the lawyers instead negotiated a larger fee—more than $8 million—paid not by the bank but from customer accounts." U.S. District Judge Milton Shadur called the case "appalling." Unfortunately, he couldn't call it unusual.

This pattern of collusion, and what amounts to surreptitious private taxation, took a great leap forward when some clever attorneys hatched a scheme to persuade state governments to sue tobacco companies. Old-style individual lawsuits against Big Tobacco for harmed health had long failed in the courts, because juries knew smokers were aware of the risks they faced in using tobacco. But then trial lawyers—who had for some years been using their mounting fortunes to buy influence with state government officials—approached those officials in the early 1990s with a novel idea for mutual enrichment: Why not have state governments sue tobacco companies for increasing the states' Medicare costs by making smokers sick? And, by the way, why not hire us as lawyers to bring your state's lawsuit?

This was a bit of a risky scheme at first, because Big Tobacco was expected to fight hard and studies showed that smokers on balance *saved* states' Medicare funds—because they died early. But as the state lawsuits progressed, the tables turned in the lawyers' favor. In 1994 Congress was raking the tobacco companies over the coals, leaking industry documents, and pushing former executives and scientists to testify against their old employers. In addition, states were altering their laws to make such lawsuits easier to win: "We changed centuries of precedent to ensure a win in this case," admitted Maryland's State Senate President. And so, in the words of one of Florida's outside counsels, the tobacco suits were becoming a "slam dunk."

Seeing easy money in the offing, other states hopped on the bandwagon, with politically connected lawyers egging them on and begging for a piece of the spoils. Big Tobacco was cornered and decided to cut a deal. The U.S. Congress tried to get involved but ended up doing nothing.

And so in 1998, Big Tobacco agreed to pay the states $246 billion over the next 25 years. The tobacco companies were relatively happy with the deal because most of that money will come from higher prices—"essentially a new tax on smokers of about 80 cents a pack," calculates Stuart Taylor—and the companies' stock prices soared once the fight was behind them. A very small number of lawyers, meanwhile, are likely to gobble up $12 to $15 billion of the payout, with some attorneys netting more than $100,000 per hour for their work.

And don't assume those lawyers were chosen on their merits. Typically they were cronies and contributors to the state attorneys general and other state officials. Many of these lawyers contributed little to the tobacco case, only joining the fight after it had been essentially won. Some of the horror stories:

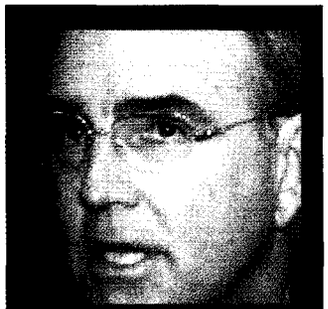
• Massachusetts' outside lawyers will grab $775 million of the state's windfall, even though their fellow tort lawyers insist they did little work on the case.

• Richard Scruggs, tort lawyer king of Pascagoula, Mis-

Scott Walter is senior editor of TAE.

PETER ANGELOS

"Most powerful private citizen of Maryland." State legislature "changed centuries of precedent" to assure he'd win tobacco lawsuit, from which he personally hopes to receive $1.1 billion. Gave Democrats $305 [illegible] 998 alone



RICHARD SCRUGGS

Brother-in-law of Trent Lott; has his finger in scores of class action suits. Will collect billions of dollars from dozens of states in [illegible] agreements.

WAYNE REAUD

Recently shook down Toshiba for $1 billion over a minor computer "malfunction" that has never actu[illegible] occurred.

DAN MORALES

Former Texas Attorney General; under criminal investigation for allegedly taking millions from trial lawyers in return for letting them overbill his state in tobacco litigation; one crony abandoned a $26[illegible]on fee to [illegible] go

From l to r: AP Photo/File; AP Photo/ Joe Marquette; AP Photo/Danny Johnston; AP Photo/ Jose Luis Magana

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sissippi, and brother-in-law of U.S. Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, has a deal with his old pal the Mississippi Attorney General to receive a large chunk of the state's attorney fees. He will also dine on dozens of other states' settlements, for a grand total of billions of dollars.

• Wisconsin's hired guns have demanded to be paid at a rate of over $3,000 per hour, not counting additional millions in inflated expenses, even though it's unclear whether those hours were put in by attorneys or by lowly staffers (one firm didn't even bother to keep complete records of its hours). State newspapers sued to obtain details and learned that the expenses included lavish travel costs for limos and chartered planes. The attorneys even charged Wisconsin for the hundreds of hours they spent fighting legislation that would've put caps on their fees and for reading newspaper editorials critical of their sweetheart deal.

• New Jersey was represented by six outside lawyers, five of whom had almost no experience in either tobacco litigation or mass torts. Most of the case work was actually done by a South Carolina lawyer, and, reports the *New Jersey Law Journal,* the local lawyers "billed themselves as working on behalf of the public interest because their bid was made through a nonprofit foundation" whose role was later quietly eliminated. None of the lawyers "had anything to do with the national settlement talks" in which New Jersey won $7.6 billion. The lawyers did shine, however, at last-minute contributions to the politicians who were choosing the state's legal team.

• Lawmakers in Pennsylvania were similarly kind to their attorney friends. The state's attorney general played a key role in the national settlement's disposition of legal fees, even though when he was a state senator he sponsored a bill to lower the legal age of smoking and otherwise befriended tobacco interests. He declined to tell the *Philadelphia Daily News* what law firms he considered hiring but turned down. The two he did select were both among his top political contributors, with close ties to his own staff. He told the *Philadelphia Inquirer* "there was a familiarity factor" and "that was how the decision was made."

• Florida hired Hugh Rodham, brother of First Lady Hillary Clinton, though he lacked any relevant legal experience. The *Washington Post* reports he spent "the last hours of the talks in a corner reading a paperback by Jack Higgins, *Drink with the Devil.*"

• Illinois lawyers, reports legal commentator Walter Olson, took no depositions and didn't bother to submit records of their hours, yet demanded around $400 million (arbitrators reduced that to $121 million). They did, however, have "close ties" to Illinois Attorney General Jim Ryan, according to the *Chicago Sun-Times.*

• In Texas, where trial lawyers give roughly $8 out of every $10 dollars contributed to the Democratic Party, attorney general Dan Morales (D) hired his pals to represent the state in the tobacco case. He is now under criminal investigation for allegedly demanding millions of dollars from private attorneys in exchange for obligating the state to pay them exorbitant fees. The *Houston Chronicle* investigated Marc Murr, one of the lawyers Morales hired, and found he had little contact with the state during the lawsuit until the fees were being arranged; then he and Morales secretly picked a three-man arbitration panel that determined his fees should amount to $130,000 an hour for each of the 2,000 hours he claimed to have worked. Shortly before he left office, Morales even signed a "Memorandum of Understanding" in which he surrendered the state's rights to object to his crony's fees. Geoffrey Hazard, an Ivy League law professor who was chief draftsman of the American Bar Association Rules of Professional Conduct, testified that he had "never seen lawyers ask their client" to sign an agreement "abandoning the client's right to dispute the lawyers' fee claim in court and giving up the client's right to appeal a judicial determination of the claim." In the end, Murr gave up his claim to a $260 million fee rather than testify under oath about how he came by it.

"Well," someone might say, "this kind of cronyism is ugly, but it's nothing new in politics." True enough, but what *is* new is the awesome scale of money-grabbing involved. As the Hudson Institute's Michael Horowitz puts it, the tobacco cases "will provide $500 million per year to 200-300 lawyers—*probably in perpetuity.*" And if those fees are unchallenged they will be "dwarfed by a follow-on settlement of the individual smoker cases likely to yield a $50-80 billion fee award to 1,000-2,000 lawyers." That would make these "unethical, collusive, and often-corrupt fee payments" the largest wealth transfer in American history.

With such enormous wealth, the lucky lawyers would possess vastly more political power than they already enjoy—and indeed could swamp all other campaign contributors. Political analyst Morton Kondracke observes that for some years now, trial lawyers have been making donations to political candidates in various locales that "dwarf" the sums given to candidates by unions, auto companies, or even the Democratic and Republican national committees.

This process feeds on itself to deepen the circle of influence and corruption. Through their political donations, warns Horowitz, trial lawyers in some states will "be able to completely control the elected judiciary and be able to pick and choose the places they want to sue and blackmail industries into settlement." Yale law professor John Langbein agrees, warning, "They're going to use their billions to get a kind of pliant, plaintiff-oriented bench."

The startling fact is that these attorneys have set a pattern not only for ripping off state governments but also establishing *de facto* new taxes for private enrichment. Smokers were just the beginning: Tort lawyers have plenty of juicy targets to extort next. Show that fatty foods cause state governments to pay more Medicare expenses and hamburger-buyers could soon be paying a fee per sandwich into the lawyers' coffers. Every beer and whisky bottle could end up with a surcharge to keep the legal sharks well fed. Convince a court (as some lawyers are trying) that consumers should be compensated for the time and aggravation of computer crashes and soon you'll see little new software being released, or retail prices of computers being doubled so manufacturers can put aside future legal fees. And on and on.

And don't think the lawyers will just go off to sun themselves on the beach after their checks clear. As Michael Barone,

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Campaign finance reformers have turned a blind eye to the hustler lawyers now grabbing dangerous amounts of political power.

co-author of the *Almanac of American Politics,* observes, the tobacco cases alone "will produce several dozen trial lawyers with the net worth—and potential political leverage—of Ross Perot or Steve Forbes." And unlike most entrepreneurs and heirs, "trial lawyers typically have the skills and political connections to become powers in their own right instantly." Barone cites U.S. Senator John Edwards of North Carolina (D), who made $40 million in accident cases and then spent $3.2 million to upset an incumbent in 1998, as a prototype of these instant pluto-politicians. The most recent Democrat to run for governor of Michigan was that sort of trial lawyer, and the Massachusetts tobacco lawyers despised even by their fellow sharks are currently heavyweights in the state's political establishment.

Barone sees ominous parallels between the business rackets of today's Russian mobsters and the class-action attacks of America's trial lawyers. Both their mobsters and our litigators "need political protection," he says; so it's not surprising they dole out millions to politicians as they seek "huge transfers of wealth…performed under color of law but in violation of basic principles of the rule of law."

What's surprising is that the so-called reformers who ritually attack "big money" in politics (usually liberals who dislike money-making in general) have turned a blind eye to these hustler lawyers sucking up huge fees at the expense of state governments, blue-collar smokers, and other unfortunates—sometimes with corporate collusion, as by the tobacco companies. In part, the explanation may be the distinct left-wing coloration of many of these mass torts, which are often linked to Ralph Nader-like anti-business crusades.

If more politicians would fight back, it's likely a formidable political coalition could be built against this money and power grab. In the near term, opponents could insist that state governments not be bilked out of their tobacco settlement dollars. In the longer run, the legal, political, and financial corruptions which feed these suits could be cleaned up. Potential backers of such a course, Horowitz points out, would include businessmen, consumers, taxpayers, moderate Democrats, both the libertarian and social conservative wings of the Republican Party, and even the major media.

Specific reforms to prevent legal fee robbery have already been proposed. In Wisconsin, for example, the *Capital Times* suggested that "any private lawyer doing work for the state would be subject to a 100 percent tax on any fee that amounts to more than $500 an hour." Similarly, Horowitz notes that both established law and professional ethics rules already mandate that all fee contracts between attorneys and their clients must be "reasonable." He suggests that existing laws which forbid pension trustees and executives at non-profit groups from receiving "unreasonable compensation" could be explicitly extended to apply to attorneys working on large class-action cases. Private lawyers working for, say, Massachusetts, could still be paid top legal dollars for their documented labors, but they would be prevented from receiving thousands and hundreds of thousands of dollars per hour, as they currently are. This simple but effective remedy may well appear in legislation this year, if Congress isn't too scared of incurring the wrath of the trial lawyers, whose political aggressiveness and willingness to pour money into races has made them the feared behemoth of campaign interests today.

If something isn't done in the tobacco cases that are already mostly settled, there will be an unending stream of future shake-downs, from paint to beef to prescription drugs. Class-action suits have recently been assembled on behalf of "gambling addicts." Car companies are an obvious target for lawyers' harpoons—blamed in increasingly innovative ways for everything from pollution to urban sprawl. Attorneys are currently racing to put together attacks on Microsoft, with one snickering to the *Washington Post* that he looked forward to making Microsoft "the next Philip Morris."

Describing his current target, trial lawyer Ron Motley brags, "If I don't bring the entire lead paint industry to its knees within three years, I will give them my boat" (which happens to be a 120-foot yacht). Not an idle boast from a man who's extracted around $3 billion out of tobacco companies for his firm.

Mississippi's infamous Richard Scruggs, reports columnist Philip Terzian, has recently been "quietly talking with portfolio managers and investment analysts" about his plans to lead the charge against HMOs and other currently unpopular businesses. Why should a lawyer "tip his hand" this way? Easy: The financial advisers will tell their investors about the impending lawsuits, causing stock prices to fall in the threatened businesses, making the companies anxious to make peace payments to Scruggs and company.

Scruggs, concludes Terzian, doesn't care about the public policy issues involved, or even whether he can win the cases in court. "He just wants to make money by intimidating businesses that operate within the law. It's neater than throwing a brick through a window, and the profits are bigger." This, he notes, is essentially extortion and "racketeering."

But today's explosion of class-action torts is far more than just a symptom of greed. For some activists and ideologues, mass litigation has become a powerful political shortcut, a way to mold society without the compromises and checks and balances of democratic lawmaking and regulating. Take Washington, D.C. attorney Michael Hausfeld, whose targets include HMOs, gun makers, biotech firms, Microsoft, and the vitamin industry. Lawyers like Hausfeld, explains the *Wall Street Journal*, anticipate industries that will be vilified in news accounts, and then they attack. Hausfeld bluntly suggests "his role is to fill the gap when government doesn't achieve social goals he considers vital." Jeremy Rifkin, a prominent left-wing activist and Hausfeld collaborator, "celebrates" the "evolution of mass litigation into a full-fledged adjunct to lawmaking and regulating." Hausfeld "is using the courts as a bully pulpit," Rifkin exults.

He's actually doing much more than that through his "social reform" suits, including co-opting the power to tax

continued on page 39

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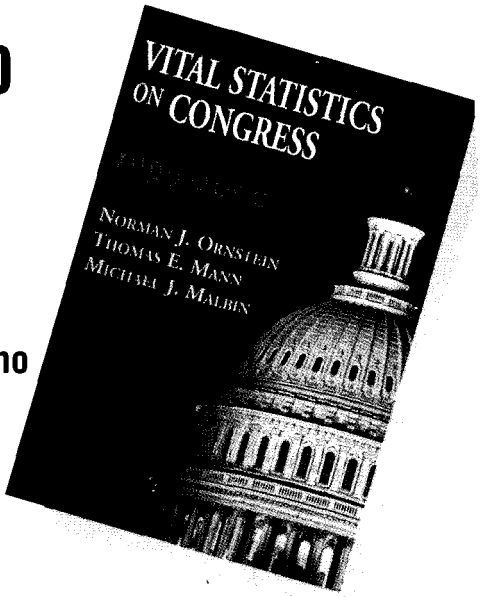

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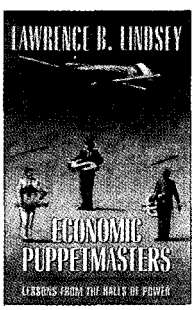

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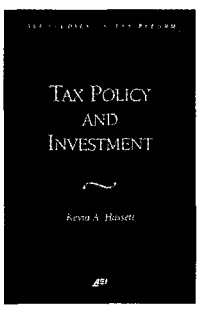

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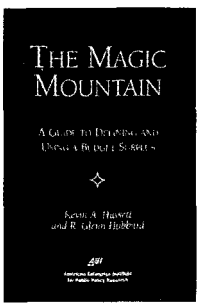

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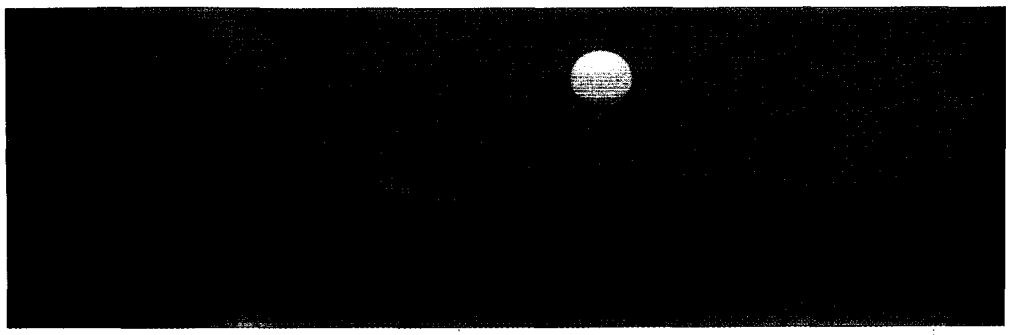

FISHING AROUND IN THE DARK

By William J. Vande Kopple

TIPPY DAM, MICHIGAN—Each autumn, I take a little trip that makes my friends wonder about my judgment and worry about my safety. I head north, the direction that since childhood I have most deeply associated with creation and recreation, all the way to the Manistee River below Tippy Dam.

I avoid the pattern set by many fishermen, those who rise around 5:00 a.m., kick Thermos bottles over on the driveway as they load their pick-ups, drive off through patchy fog, and stop a couple of hours later at some Hilltop Bakery for an apple fritter. Instead, I leave in the late afternoon, two hours or so after schools get out for the day.

Since Tippy Dam is about two hours north of my house, by the time I arrive, the sun has been almost entirely eclipsed by the irregular line of forested dunes to the west, leaving only nearly horizontal slants of light to turn the tops of the oaks along the south rim of the river valley the reddish side of gold. Each year I struggle with the emotion, but each year I can't help but feel ambivalent about these sunsets: almost a giddy awe in view of the trees' burnished crowns, but some dull, aching misgiving as well. For as the sun's rays burn higher and higher into the oaks, it means that the walkway down to the river, where I hope to find the king salmon spawning run at its peak, is increasingly succumbing to implacable darkness.

The descent to the river is the first challenge I face, because I choose to start fishing at dusk and continue through much of the night. After I stash my spare tackle on the bank, light my lantern, and build a little cairn to balance it on, I start looking for a good place to wade into the river.

Even in the limited light of the lantern, I can usually find a sand spit or gravel bar that angles into the river. These usually extend out to fairly secure places to stand. It's after I hook a big fish that I face new problems with footing. Many of the bigger kings, especially if they are fresh from Lake Michigan, seem, when hooked, to consider it nothing more than playful romping to make runs of over a hundred yards downstream from the angler. If you have a reel that holds hundreds of yards of line and that has a dependable drag, you can try to hold your place in the currents and hang on while the fish bores away farther and farther back toward the big lake. Soon, you hope, you will be able to tire it, turn its head, and pump it back upstream to your net.

Reels that can hold that much line are too heavy for me to fish with through most of the night. So after any fish I hook charges off 75 or 80 yards away from me, I have to start chasing it or it will pull all the line off my spool. Staggering along downstream in strong currents with only wavering streaks of light from lanterns on the shore to guide me, all the while trying to hold my rod high and to peer ahead for an inkling of what I might be stepping into, is not the safest thing I do in life.

More than once I have swung a foot forward into the side of a rock, usually losing my balance, lurching around desperately, trying to keep water from seeping or spilling over the top of my waders. The insinuating chill of seeping I've experienced more than once; the paralyzing shock of spilling I've managed to avoid.

My most dangerous chase took me near an old birch that had been blown into the river and now lay with its branches throbbing against the current. At the time I had no way of knowing it, but two guys fishing downstream from the birch had tied a stringer to one of its outermost branches, and on this stringer they had secured seven or eight kings. These fish were lying resignedly in a little pool below the branch when I tried to plant a boot across several of their backs. I assume that they were not happy about having the nylon cord of the stringer threaded through their gills and about being forced to lie side by side in the pool. I know that when I tried to make room for my boot among them they were not pleased.

If they had been some other kind of fish, cute little slivers of six- or eight-inch perch, for example, all I would have felt would have been some fluttering around my ankle. But these kings all weighed about 20 pounds, and their sudden thrashing tossed me off my balance. I was able to arrest my fall, but to do so I had to jam my knee against the sharp edge of a rock. I didn't break or separate anything, but for nearly three months afterwards I carried an uncomfortable but iconic reminder of my misstep in the river—water on that knee.

It doesn't really make sense, since missteps in rivers that can fill waders with water occasionally lead to drownings, but what I fear even more than missteps while fishing at night is other anglers' backcasts. One of the attractions of fishing at night is that the river is usually not as crowded with anglers as during the

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day. But the fish do not distribute themselves evenly throughout the river, and experienced anglers have an extra sense that alerts them to where others are hooking fish; so some congregating of anglers in certain spots is inevitable.

Imagine, then, four or five guys standing within several feet of one another, imagine further that they are all using rods about ten feet long, imagine further still that they whip these behind them to get the momentum they need to cast their lures well out into the river, and imagine finally that all of them have at least one ultra-sharp hook at the end of the line they whip back and then snap forward.

The sound of rods and lines whipping the air is, I find, eerily entrancing. But if anglers do not check the spaces behind them before making their backcasts, they can drive a hook into a fellow fisherman's flesh. What a flashing hook can do to parts of the human body is, without exception, ugly.

So far I have never been hooked. The closest I came was when a guy took my cap off shortly after he moved from backcast into cast. A little whup, some rustling of my hair, a quick touch of cold, and my hat disappeared into the dark. His string of apologies made it more difficult for me to forget how narrowly I had skirted the pain.

I have, however, seen three other fishermen with hooks in their bodies. One had one of the treble hooks of a Mepps spinner in the well-defined muscles of his left forearm. Fortunately, when the careless angler first felt his lure hit the other's forearm, he gave a sharp jerk on his line. Thus, the hook didn't just enter the man's forearm—it entered, bore a neat arc through the muscle, and emerged, barb and all, about a half-inch lower on his arm. After realizing what had happened, the victim took out his pliers, cut the barb and point of the hook off, grabbed the hook by its shank, and wiggled it backwards out of his arm.

Another victim wasn't as fortunate. He had been hooked in one of the muscles along the back of his neck, just above the collar of his wool shirt. In his case, the point and barb of the hook had penetrated the muscle and had stayed there. So one of his friends had to try a different method of extraction. He bent the eye of the hook down toward his friend's neck, thereby rounding off and putting pressure on the curve of the hook. He then took some of his heaviest fishing line and looped it under that curve. Finally, while maintaining pressure on the hook with his left hand, he wrapped the ends of the line around several fingers of his right hand and gave the line a sharp yank. He tore up the tissue on his friend's neck a bit, but the hook pulled out, giving off just the slightest slurping sound.

EACH AUTUMN,

I TAKE A LITTLE TRIP

THAT MAKES MY FRIENDS

WONDER ABOUT

MY JUDGMENT.

A third victim needed assistance that he trusted no one at the dam to provide. He had the hook of a half-ounce Little Cleo spoon in his nose, about half an inch up on the left side. The barb of the hook had not emerged from his flesh; so it was impossible to cut the point and barb off and work the rest of the hook backward out of his nose. And everyone could see that the curves of his nose and cheek allowed no good angle to put pressure on the shank of the hook to prepare for a fishing-line yank. So after glancing skeptically at nearby anglers, some of whom were pulling rusty jackknives and bloodstained tweezers out of pockets in their vests, this man decided to drive 20 miles to the clinic in Manistee. As he packed up his gear and headed toward the steps, the lure, hanging down along the side of his mouth, clearly fulfilled the promise of its nickname: the "Wigl" lure.

Even in the face of such actual or potential troubles, I will continue to make these excursions, at least until I fear I cannot get back up all those steps. Why?

It is not that night fishing lets me get by using heavier line than anyone would use during the day. It is not that in the dark the salmon can feel secure enough to roam more widely in the river. It is not even that at night many of them are unusually aggressive biters. It has to do, ultimately, with mystery, struggle, and revelation.

When a king salmon strikes my lure at night, it usually does so far out of my sight. Once hooked, it will often jump or thrash violently on the surface, maybe 30 or 40 yards away from me, and the anglers closest to the small storm in the water will yell, sometimes with some anxiety or impatience in their voices, "Whose fish?" "Mine," I yell, "way over here," and I know that although they might have a chance to glimpse the fish, it will stay hidden from me.

If it's a big fish, it will often start making runs away from me. Usually it will head downstream, but if it's feeling somewhat imperious, it will reverse its direction and head back upstream, moving with strength even against the current. Once upstream from me, it can circle around and start to head downstream behind my back. But I never see it; all I can do is try to focus on the point where the line slices the surface of the river.

Even after I begin to wear the fish down and have started to back my way toward the shoreline, with the fish sometimes boiling around in the shallow water only a few yards from my feet, it is too dark for me to make it out.

And so for minute after minute, my forearms cramping from pulling back on the rod, the small of my back aching from arching backwards to exert more pressure against the fish, my feet knocking into rocks and pieces of driftwood around me, I never get to see what's on the end of the line.

Only when I succeed at last in hauling it up on the gravel of the shoreline do I have a chance to see what I've caught. Then, using the beam from my small flashlight to cut narrowly through the dark, I suck breath sharply past my teeth when I realize that what I have held fast to and wrested from the dark and swirling swiftness—its eyes intent on the spawn, glinting with knowledge of death in life and life in death—is clearly a thing of beauty. And we all know what that is.

William J. Vande Kopple teaches English at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

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the Washington Economist

A Dirty Little D.C. Secret Threatens to Expand

By Peter J. Wallison

Fannie Mae (the Federal National Mortgage Association) and Freddie Mac (the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation) are government-sponsored financial institutions that are extremely powerful yet seldom covered in the general media. But the recent formation of a group of private companies opposed to further expansion of these two enterprises has shone a bit of new light in some normally dark corners. The opposing firms—mortgage lenders, mortgage insurers, and other financial companies—complain that Fannie and Freddie are increasingly using their government subsidies to encroach on private businesses.

It's fairly routine for big companies to join together to lobby in Washington. What makes this case interesting is that these corporations—including such heavyweights as GE, Chase Manhattan, and Wells Fargo—are decided underdogs. They have clout, of course, but they are like the boxer in the classic comic nightmare: He's the main event in a small town where his opponent, the referee, the judges, and the timekeeper all have the same last name.

You see, Fannie and Freddie represent a new and highly unusual business form—the government-subsidized private corporation. They have evolved far beyond their modest origins by exploiting their government backing the way a pilot fish exploits a shark. Content to live in the shadow of the great one, they prosper by doing many small favors for the political class, in the process gaining a kind of invulnerability.

Initially established as government agencies that would lubricate U.S. mortgage markets by buying and selling home loans, Fannie and Freddie were "privatized" by allowing them to issue shares to the public. But they retained so many preferential relationships with the federal government that the financial markets have concluded (correctly) that they will never be allowed to fail. Among these relationships are the fact that the President appoints five members of their boards of directors, the Fed is authorized to buy and sell their debt, they are exempt from state and local taxes and from SEC registration, and the Secretary of the Treasury is authorized to invest up to $2.25 billion in their securities if he believes that is in the public interest. This government support enables the GSEs to borrow money for their operations at rates much lower than private competitors, and thus to dominate whatever markets they are allowed to enter.

TWO EXTREMELY POWERFUL GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS ARE USING THEIR FEDERAL SUBSIDIES TO ENCROACH ON PRIVATE BUSINESSES, AND ERODE DEMOCRATIC ACCOUNTABILITY.

The combination of government support and market dominance makes the two firms extraordinarily profitable. In one recent annual report, Fannie notes that $1,000 in Fannie stock purchased ten years earlier would then have been worth $27,000, a rate of appreciation far greater than the securities markets generally, even in the historic bull market of recent years. Fannie is one of only a few companies in the S&P 500 which has had double-digit earnings growth for 12 straight years, and Fannie's chairman recently stated that he expected the company's earnings to increase at a 15 percent annual rate for at least the next five years. It is no secret where this unusual profitability is comes from; the Congressional Budget Office has estimated that 42 percent of the profits reported by Fannie and Freddie in 1995 were attributable to the subsidy they received from Uncle Sam.

The truth is, Fannie and Freddie have long outlived their usefulness, and the U.S. mortgage market they helped create can now function perfectly well without them. This is demonstrated by the health of the so-called "jumbo" mortgage market—made up of loans larger than the $240,000 maximum that Fannie and Freddie are permitted to purchase. In this segment, private banks, securities firms, and others routinely package and re-sell mortgages, perfectly smoothly, without any government assistance.

In the face of this reality, Fannie and Freddie no longer argue that they are essential, just that they reduce the cost of middle-class mortgages to the tune of about 3/10ths of 1 percent, on average, by passing along a portion of their government subsidy to borrowers. Like all bureaucracies, Fannie and Freddie are never going to shut themselves down voluntarily. And since they are implicitly backed by the government, there's

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no competitor who can put them out of business.

But the problem here is more serious than the standard case of an outdated government agency seeking to evade its obsolescence, or even the threat of government-supported companies competing with the private sector. Fannie and Freddie represent a real threat to the essential problem of a democracy—holding the government accountable. By exploiting their government support, these two enterprises offer Congress an easy and nearly invisible way of doling out goodies without facing the troublesome details of appropriating and taxing for the new spending. For Fannie and Freddie are off-budget and out of sight.

And the amounts are not small. The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that in 1995 alone, government support for Fannie and Freddie had an aggregate value of $6.5 billion. And not all of that went to benefit the middle-class housing market—the purpose for which it was publicly given. Instead, according to CBO and Treasury Department estimates, only about two-thirds actually reached the mortgage markets. The balance of the subsidies received by Fannie and Freddie, $2.1 billion, went to the shareholders and managements of the firms. (Fannie and Freddie pay salaries and stock options that compensate many of their politically connected top officers in seven figures.)

This would seem like shocking news, but Congress has raised no fuss. And no wonder: Fannie and Freddie are not to be trifled with. In the last election cycle, they made $1.3 million in "soft money" political contributions. In addition, their employees made hundreds of thousands of dollars in direct political gifts. Even better, the two enterprises hold fundraisers with and for helpful lawmakers, introducing them to Fannie and Freddie's powerful constituencies—homebuilders, realtors, mortgage lenders, and securities underwriters. And they are always there for the important little things: employment at very generous salaries for former political staffers and supporters, jobs back in congressional home districts, highly visible grants to favored community groups, and fees for a legion of lobbyists—all provided very discreetly.

As long as the public and the media remain supine, everybody in this little game wins. Congress can sustain a giveaway for the middle class without having to vote an actual appropriation or place an explicit tax on anyone. In exchange, the politicians get campaign support from enormously profitable and indulgent patrons. It's the perfect Washington deal; only the taxpayers are left out.

Under these circumstances, how long can Congress resist creating more Fannie Maes? Not long, as it turns out. H.R. 10, the so-called "Financial Modernization" bill now in Congress, would permit the Home Loan Banks—which also borrow on implied federal support—to make loans to banks that will in turn make loans to small business. Thus, more off-budget, non-appropriated government largess would be doled out politically each year, in a new sector unrelated to housing. Can environmental loans, hospital loans, and other public aid be far behind?.

We have to recognize these government-guaranteed "private" slush funds for what they are—a serious threat to the public's control of its own government. For this reason, federal sponsorship of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac should be ended, so that their example doesn't spread to other sectors.

Despite their extraordinary political clout, there is some hope of this happening. The rare calls for true privatization of Fannie and Freddie—cutting all of their ties to the U.S. government—have so far always been fended off by the army of lobbyists and Congressional supporters in service to Fannie and Freddie. But eventually, privatization or some other major change *has to* come about, for one reason: Fannie and Freddie cannot continue to mushroom in revenues and profitability at their current rate without outgrowing the middle-class mortgage market itself. There will come a time in the next few years when they must either lift the $240,000 cap on their permissible mortgage purchases, or branch out into entirely new areas of activity, giving up any pretense that they exist to provide a public service to middle-class homeowners.

Without one of these shifts, their annual requirements for new mortgage product will simply outstrip the growth of the U.S. housing market, and Fannie and Freddie will have to begin buying back from private investors the huge numbers of mortgage-backed securities they have already guaranteed. They will then be seen not as facilitators of market liquidity, or even as benefactors of the middle class, but simply as two gigantic and growing S&Ls, feeding like black holes on the surrounding mortgage matter, increasing the liability of the federal government while providing less and less relative value to homeowners.

Between them, Fannie and Freddie currently either own or have placed their guarantee on over $2 trillion of U.S. mortgage debt. In five years, if they stay on their forecasted growth path, they could hold or have guaranteed over $3 trillion in middle class mortgages—a market share as high as 63 percent. This means that the Federal Government will stand liable for a huge proportion of all residential mortgage debt.

So some kind of change is inevitable. If Fannie and Freddie are wise, they will seek now to structure their own separation from the federal government—lest they be forced to later on less favorable terms. But if they do not choose this course, at some point Congress will have to act.

Privatization—severing the many government connections that give Fannie and Freddie their unique advantages—is one solution. But this raises its own problems: the two institutions are already so large that simple privatization might still leave them in a position to dominate their markets. So privatization might have to be accompanied by a break-up. The political difficulties of this course are obvious, but the alternative—leaving Fannie and Freddie to grow ever larger on the government's credit—is clearly worse.

Peter Wallison is a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, and a director of MGIC, a private mortgage insurance company.

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Flashback

TO KNOW NOTHING OF WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE YOU WERE BORN IS TO REMAIN EVER A CHILD—*Cicero*

April's Forgotten Day

Once upon a time in America, schoolchildren celebrated a lovely little holiday called Arbor Day. The children would sing songs about Johnny Appleseed, recite Joyce Kilmer into the ground, learn the difference between an oak and a maple, and bundle up against the spring chill to go plant an actual tree. The planting, like Arbor Day itself, was both symbolic and practical, and a nice lesson in the ways in which conservation and renewal begin at home. Fittingly, Iowa painter Grant Wood made Arbor Day the subject of one of his most iconic paintings.

But that was then, and this is now. Beyond its hometown of Nebraska City, Nebraska, Arbor Day has faded into virtual obscurity; its historic date, April 22, will be given over this year to that dreary drizzle of agit-prop known as Earth Day. The difference between Arbor Day and Earth Day is the difference between tucking a beech in your front yard and e-mailing a machine-written plea for a global warming treaty to your UN representative.

The date of Arbor Day has always varied from state to state, usually depending on the planting season: its very lack of fixity was part of its human-scale charm. California observes it on March 7, Luther Burbank's birthday, but before its recent transplantation to the last Friday in April, most states declared it to be April 22, the birthdate of J. Sterling Morton of Nebraska City, the father of Arbor Day.

Morton was a newspaper editor and member of the Nebraska Board of Agriculture. Desirous of windbreaks, shade, lumber, and the simple aesthetic pleasure of that woody wonder that only God can make, Morton proposed a statewide tree-planting festival. He got his wish: On April 10, 1872, more than one million trees were planted in Nebraska, and over

the next 16 years 350 million new trees brought a sylvan touch to the prairie state. Other states picked up on the idea, and by 1882, schoolchildren around the country celebrated Arbor Day with parades, ceremonial plantings to honor the dead, and the introduction of seeds to ground, which begins the miracle.

But perhaps in its reliance on the public school system Arbor Day contained the seeds of its own destruction. States, and later the federal government, could not resist tweaking Arbor Day. It became Arbor and Bird Day in some places, which was harmless enough, but before long it was hijacked by the highwaymen of the Good Roads movement—the apostles of progress who would go on to pave America with your ancestors' tax dollars.

By the teens, the U.S. Bureau of Education was flooding the nation's schools with bulletins promoting the bizarre hybrid "Good Roads Arbor Day." You see, "If a people have no roads, they are savages," as bureau propaganda put it. Properly instructed on Good Roads Arbor Day, the young scholars might grow up "to relieve our country of this stigma of having the worst roads of all civilized nations." Which they did—who says public education doesn't work?

(Piling yet another progressive cause atop the faltering branch of Arbor Day, the organizers of the West Virginia Arbor and Bird Day chirped, "We can have a good system of consolidated schools only where we have good roads.")

Nevertheless, Arbor Day survived, frequently observed in hamlets and parks and neighborhood schools—until it was clear-cut by Earth Day.

Earth Day was the brainchild of Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson, who envisioned it as a national teach-in on the environment. The first Earth Day, April 22, 1970, was a hectoring mix of street theater, corporate P. R., and speeches by such paragons of restraint and virtue as Senators Ted Kennedy and Bob Packwood. (The most prominent public opponents of the first Earth Day were the often ridiculed but usually dead-on ladies of the Daughters of the American Revolution.)

In the three decades since, Earth Day has become a pagan holiday for pallid urbanites and technology-enslaved yuppies whose field trips to the outdoors often end in paralyzing fears of Lyme disease. Earth Day is about as green as a $100 bill.

So on April 22 of this year, when the networks and the schools and the politicians are droning on about the oppressive bore that is Earth Day, commit a simple act of resistance and patriotism: Observe Arbor Day. Plant a tree.

—Bill Kauffman

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Hollywood Report

Ten Commandments vs. Springer?

Not long ago, Laura Schlessinger made a deal that turned her into a certified Hollywood player.

In September, the popular 53-year-old radio therapist known to an estimated weekly audience of 20 million as "Dr. Laura" will join the club of syndicated TV talk, whose membership includes Jerry Springer, Queen Latifah, Ricki Lake, Jenny Jones, Leeza, Montel, Maury, and Sally Jessie.

Why would Schlessinger—who brought the Ten Commandments into talk radio and claims to have "probably sent more people back to Catholicism than the Pope"—want to join such an, um, enlightened bunch?

Certainly part of it is the approximately $3 million she will reap from Paramount and the more than 125 stations planning to broadcast her daily hour. Schlessinger's other motivation is her desire to see whose side the national TV audience will come down on once she puts her brand of "preaching, teaching, and nagging" up against the TV peep shows.

Schlessinger and Paramount executives are trying to tap into the same enthusiasm that caused her national radio show, which debuted in 1994, to grow from 20 stations to more than 200 in under three years.

Dr. Laura's phenomenal success, coupled with a public that, according to a recent Gallup poll, now cares more about the moral standards of the country and the character and integrity of the President than it does about foreign affairs, the environment, gun control, or campaign finance reform, would seem to spell ratings.

There is a risk that Dr. Laura fans will be divided between her radio and TV broadcasts, thus diluting both audiences. To avoid this, local TV programmers are being encouraged to schedule the new show so it doesn't compete with the radio program.

Moreover, although the precise format is still being decided, it's certain the TV show won't be a televised version of what's on the AM dial. Producers are well aware that TV versions of the radio gigs of Rush Limbaugh and Howard Stern weren't compelling. So efforts are being made to create a unique forum that incorporates the themes of Dr. Laura's bestselling books—like *Ten Stupid Things Women Do to Mess Up Their Lives* and *How Could You DO That?!: The Abdication of Character, Courage, and Conscience*—with audience participation.

Orchestrating much of this is Velma Cato, an alumna of NBC News. During the 1980s, she headed the network's bureaus in New York and the Southeast. More recently, Cato directed a documentary about blacks in TV and film.

Even though the series is six months away from its premiere, it's already succeeded in generating attention—the kind that often makes Hollywood quail. Homosexual activists have targeted Schlessinger because they're afraid she'll use her TV broadcast to amplify on her traditional Judeo-Christian views about homosexuality.

Schlessinger, an Orthodox Jew, describes homosexuality as a "deviant sexual orientation," advocates counseling for gays who wish to become normal, and is opposed to gay marriage. In February, Paramount executives invited officials of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation to the studio to hear their concerns. The result was a joint statement saying that the show will have "many points of view." Dr. Laura herself didn't attend, and her spokesman says that Schlessinger hasn't ceded any ground.

Dr. Laura Schlessinger

AP Photo/Susan Sterner

The undercurrent here seems to stem from Schlessinger's invitation to GLAAD executive director Joan Garry last summer that they meet. During their conversation, Schlessinger remained stalwart that homosexuality flies in the face of biology and morality, and a transcript of the meeting was later reprinted in the Dr. Laura listener magazine. Garry's effectiveness at arguing the GLAAD position was reportedly a disappointment to many gay leaders, and efforts now to influence Paramount are seen as an attempt to seize the upper hand.

In the current climate, Schlessinger is in a tricky place. Several years ago, CBS News suspended Andy Rooney for a commentary in which he innocently referred to the health risks of homosexuality.

This January, Laura Schlessinger responded to the flap with a short commentary in the *Los Angeles Times* stating, "My beliefs make me a threat to the radical goals of homosexual activists, who send me hate mail and death threats. Their well-organized campaign against my freedom of speech is rhetorical thuggery at best and religious persecution at worst." For now, Dr. Laura isn't talking to reporters. But one general manager at a Fox affiliate told me Paramount secretly loves the buzz about the show.

In the meantime, one wonders whether Jerry Falwell or the American Family Association's Don Wildmon will be invited onto the Paramount lot for orange juice and Evian the next time they have concerns about TV and movies.

—John Meroney

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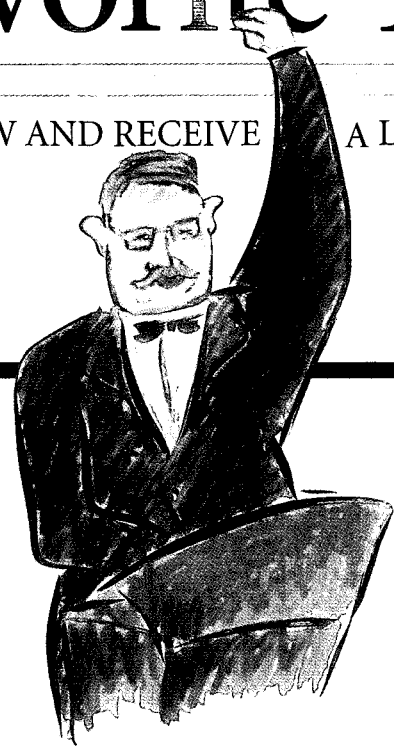

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the Digest

SUMMARIES OF IMPORTANT NEW RESEARCH FROM THE NATION'S UNIVERSITIES, THINK TANKS, AND INVESTIGATIVE PUBLICATIONS

POLITICS

Little Government, Not Big

George W. Liebmann, *Solving Problems Without Large Government.* Praeger Publishers, P.O. Box 5007, Westport, Connecticut 06881.

Liebmann, a contributing writer to *TAE*, argues that many of today's social problems are best solved by small, local organizations, not large, impersonal bureaucracies. He cites many organizations in Europe and Japan that America can emulate. Among them:

Community associations. About 30 percent of American homeowners are part of a residential community association (RCA). These organizations could be given more power than they now have. RCAs could purchase local streets and maintain them, as well as control some local zoning. They might also contract with other organizations to provide regular deliveries of food and other essentials.

Parent councils. In most European nations parent councils have some control over public school budgets. In France, all secondary schools have a committee of parents, teachers, staff members, and concerned citizens which controls 10 percent of a school's budget. England has gone further: Reforms enacted in 1988 ensure that parental councils oversee 87 percent of the budget of all public schools, and, under certain conditions, 100 percent.

Old-age clubs. In Japan, an old-age club (*roojinkai*) is a nonprofit organization of senior citizens. About 60 percent of the funds for these clubs come from voluntary dues, with an additional 20 percent coming from neighborhood associations and another 20 percent from the state. Club members look after and help one another. They also work with the *mensei-iin*, a corps of volunteers dedicated to regularly calling on seniors who require assistance. The clubs also provide relief for people caring for aging parents.

Both nonprofit groups and the state could help ensure that American local associations become more successful. Liebmann suggests national nonprofits might be more useful if they worked to strengthen local organizations rather than reflexively lobbying for bigger federal government. The American Association of Retired Persons, for example, has stressed "the defense of national government benefits rather than the creation of local institutions to take up some of the slack as demographic pressure causes those benefits to contract."

Washington can play its part by allowing contributions to local associations to be tax-deductible. It can also produce pamphlets explaining how to set up local community associations. Such government publicity campaigns, Liebmann contends, have been done before. In the 1920s, Department of Commerce pamphlets spread the notion of zoning across America, and a 1960s campaign from the Federal Housing Administration transformed condominiums from a Puerto Rican curiosity into a national norm.

Liebmann's goal is to devolve as much power as possible from a large national government to thousands of tiny local units. "For some functions at least, sub-local government is not only efficacious but indispensable."

Empty Budgets

Eric M. Patashnik, "Budgeting More, Deciding Less," in *The Public Interest* (Winter 2000), 1112 16th Street N.W. #530, Washington, D.C . 20036.

Yale political scientist Patashnik believes the federal budget debate is noisier—and less important—than it used to be. "While the budget involves high political stakes, the policy importance of budget-making has declined over time."

Until 1974, Congress did not formally debate the budget, but instead focused on the 13 appropriations bills which determined how much money the government would spend. But President Richard Nixon, in an effort to check congressional spending, tried to "impound" or block some congressionally mandated spending. Congress not only outlawed "impoundment," but also created the Congressional Budget Office and the House and Senate Budget Committees to create "budget resolutions," which for the first time placed guidelines on the overall size of the budget.

In the 1980s and '90s, Congress placed some subsidies (Social Security, Medicare) outside of the budget process and declared that other government payments would

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be automatically indexed for inflation or be paid for out of trust funds. As a result, the portion of federal government spending outside the budget has risen from one-third in the 1950s to over two-thirds today. As Democrats have become more liberal and Republicans more conservative, the debate over the remaining third of the budget is louder than ever.

The current budget surplus has quieted the debate. But Patashnik predicts budget deficits will return when Baby Boomers begin to cash their Social Security checks. Given the large proportion of federal spending that has already been promised before the budget battles start, it's likely that future debates will be full of sound and fury—and ever less important.

ECONOMICS

A Regulatory Report Card

Robert W. Hahn, "Changing the *Federal Register* to Improve Regulatory Accountability," in *Regulation* (No. 4, 1999), Cato Institute, 1000 Massachusetts Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001.

Washington bureaucrats continue to generate many regulations each year, but rarely is there an accurate cost-benefit analysis of these new mandates. American Enterprise Institute resident scholar Hahn suggests one way to provide such information is to have the *Federal Register* provide an assessment of each new proposal.

Hahn proposes attaching a "Regulatory Impact Statement" or RIS for "each significant regulation." Such a statement would include estimates of the benefits and costs of a regulation, including any affects on state and local governments, businesses, and individuals. The RIS would require regulators to list alternatives to the proposed regulation and why these alternatives were rejected.

Requiring standard information for each new regulation would give interested parties a chance to assess the proposal. While it's likely some regulatory agencies would fudge the cost-benefit estimates, Hahn argues that even estimates inflating benefits or dampening costs "would make it easier for skeptics to refute the analysis or show how it could be improved."

Requiring regulators to produce detailed cost-benefit estimates, Hahn concludes, should "give Congress better information on which to make judgments about regulatory policies."

Deregulation Still Makes Sense

Roger G. Noll, *The Economics and Politics of the Slowdown in Regulatory Reform.* AEI-Brookings Joint Center for Regulatory Studies, 1150 Seventeenth Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

The years 1975-85 saw the most deregulation in U.S. history. There was near-complete deregulation of the airline and trucking industries as well as substantial deregulation of oil and natural gas markets. With the introduction of emissions trading, even environmental regulation received a dose of market competition.

Since 1985, however, regulation has made a comeback. The Americans with Disabilities Act and the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 have proved to be potent red-tape generators. The Telecommunications Act of 1996, while increasing deregulation of cable television and long-distance telephone service, was a bill so complex that it took courts three years to figure out how the law should be implemented. And emissions trading, over a decade after it was introduced, remains uncommon.

Why is it so hard to continue along the path of deregulation? Stanford economist Noll sees two main reasons: devolving regulatory responsibility and increased partisanship among economists.

Many recent changes have given state regulators more power. These regulators are more likely to preserve the status quo than to allow new entrants to challenge existing firms. For example, the Telecommunications Act theoretically opened up local telephone service to competition, but state regulators have favored "interests that are politically important within the state over interests that are politically located elsewhere." Most states support local telephone monopolies—which pay large amounts of state taxes—over out-of-state rivals. As a result, most Americans still have no choice in local telephone service.

Noll also faults his fellow economists for selling themselves as consultants and expert witnesses rather than striving for nonpartisan reforms based on good economics. The deregulation of the 1970s and '80s was based on a "virtual unanimity among professional economists" that deregulation was grounded on sound economic principles. But today's economists are likelier to retreat to partisan corners.

"As with interest groups," Noll writes, "economists are more effective when they agree." If politicians followed today's general consensus among economists, they would push for further financial, transportation, and telecommunications deregulation. Perhaps the rate of deregulatory progress "would increase if the ratio of objective research to didactic policy advocacy was a bit higher."

SOCIETY

Cities Strike Back

Joel Kotkin, *The Future of the Center: The Core City in the New Economy.* Pepperdine University Institute for Public Policy/Reason Public Policy Institute, 3415 South Sepulveda Boulevard #400, Los Angeles, California 90034.

American cities continue to struggle. They are no longer the homes of major manufacturers or *Fortune* 500 corporate headquarters. Families who can afford to leave cities often do, ensuring that most of the older U.S. cities have dwindling populations. Yet *TAE* contributing writer Kotkin finds cities have three trends in their favor:

Computer workers. Many new Internet companies and other computer-related enterprises are located in inner cities. Buildings that used to be lofts, warehouses, and light manufacturing facilities, such as those found in lower Manhattan, San Francisco's South of Market, or Belltown in Seattle, are ideal for computer startups. These enterprises tend to cluster near each other, so that employees can have the personal interactions denied those who only communicate via e-mail or fax. Also, many employees of these firms are childless or single, and find city life an adventure rather than a chore.

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Immigrants. Immigrants not only revitalize ailing working-class districts, they also find inner cities attractive places to create new trade-oriented enterprises. Many businessmen saw Los Angeles's Central City East district as little more than an amalgamation of aging flophouses. But Hong Kong entrepreneur Charlie Woo saw these buildings as ideal places to house his toy importing business. Today, "Toytown" is home to 500 businesses employing 6,000 workers with combined annual sales of $500 million. Similar entrepreneurs have transformed such blighted areas as the Harwin Corridor outside Houston or the Asia Trade Center near Dallas's Harry Hines Boulevard.

Quirks. Many people who find trips to malls and chain stores a chore now flock to the city to experience adventures they can't get at home. Manhattan, New Orleans, and San Francisco provide pleasures that can't easily be replicated. Cities that wreck existing communities in the name of urban renewal or master planning may create mistakes that take decades to recover from.

"The fate of the central city," Kotkin concludes, "turns on recovering their economic and political sense of uniqueness. In their struggle for capital, skilled workers, and entrepreneurs, core cities must calculate what their natural advantages are and then market themselves on that basis."

SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENT

Wasted Cleanup

W. Kip Viscusi and James T. Hamilton, "Are Risk Regulators Rational? Evidence From Hazardous Waste Cleanup Decisions," in *The American Economic Review* (September 1999), American Economic Association, 2014 Broadway #305, Nashville, Tennessee 37203.

Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer postulated a 90-10 principle: 90 percent of the benefits from any government risk-prevention activity come from the first 10 percent of the funds spent on the program. Viscusi of the Harvard Law School and Hamilton of Duke University find ample evidence for Justice Breyer's theory in the Environmental Protection Agency's Superfund program, designed to clean up toxic waste sites.

Viscusi and Hamilton studied 150 toxic waste sites the EPA was cleaning up in 1991 and '92. They looked at the amount of cancer-causing chemicals found at these sites, and then at Census data to see how many cancer cases were found—and prevented—in the affected areas.

The authors found politics played a critical role in the EPA's decisions on how clean a particular Superfund site should be. Areas with high voter turnout and environmentalist senators were more likely to have a stringent cleanup. The EPA was also more likely to increase efforts against chemicals extensively covered by the press (such as PCBs), even if these chemicals were less hazardous than chemicals attracting less publicity. In addition, the EPA was more diligent in cleaning sites located near minority areas than sites near wealthy neighborhoods.

The EPA's expenditures flunked a cost-benefit test. The first five percent of the amount the EPA spent on a Superfund site eliminated 99.47 percent of the possible cancers at a cost of $145 million per cancer case.

By the time the EPA had spent half its budget on a Superfund cleanup, they had eliminated 99.96 percent of the possible cancers at a cost of $6.4 billion per cancer case prevented. And by the time 95 percent of the EPA Superfund budget was spent, 99.98 percent of the cancers were eliminated at a cost of $241 billion per cancer case prevented.

"In hazardous waste cleanup decisions," Viscusi and Hamilton conclude, "risk-perception biases and risk politics matter."

OTHER COUNTRIES

Stay Out of the Caucasus

Anatol Lieven, "The (Not So) Great Game," in *The National Interest* (Winter 1999/2000), 1112 16th Street N.W. #540, Washington, D.C. 20036.

In the late nineteenth century, the British and Russians fought a war of intrigue in Central Asia known as the "Great Game." Now, with nine newly independent nations occupying former Soviet territory in Central Asia and the Caucasus, some foreign policy experts suggest the U.S. should increase its diplomatic presence in the region. Lieven, of Britain's International Institute for Strategic Studies, disagrees. "The importance of the Caspian region to U.S. foreign policy is greatly exaggerated."

Some think the recently discovered Caspian Sea oil might need U.S. protection. But the strike is small; geologists estimate it is only about 3 percent of the world's supply. Moreover, given the "poor communications, state corruption, and incompetence in the region," Western oil companies are unlikely to make major investments, such as large new pipelines.

Other experts believe it is in America's interest to promote democracy in Central Asia. But most of the region's nations are dictatorships overseen by the same Communist apparatchiks who ruled when the USSR was in power. They are unlikely to become true democracies in the foreseeable future. Plus, increasing U.S. diplomatic presence in the region might lull Central Asian leaders into thinking that American forces will bail them out in the event of civil war or revolution. If American diplomats make promises to Central Asian leaders that they can't fulfill, the result could be a debacle comparable in magnitude to America's failure to keep the Shah of Iran in power in 1978-79.

Lieven believes America has two interests in Central Asia and the Caucasus: to attack terrorist havens and to prevent a Turko-Russian war that could escalate to a nuclear conflict. The U.S. could thus prove useful as a mediator in the Karabakh frontier dispute between Azerbaijan (a Turkish ally) and Armenia (a Russian ally). But the U.S. should not further increase its presence in the region. "The United States has neither the reason, the power, nor the will to replace a largely vanished Russian hegemony in the Caspian region."

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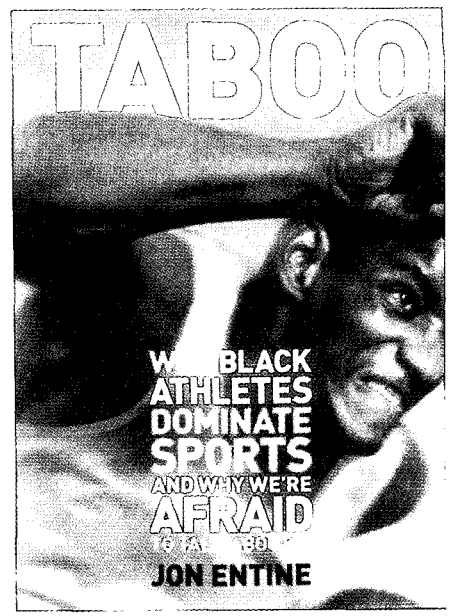

DARK SECRET

By Walter Williams

Taboo: Why Black Athletes Dominate Sports and Why We're Afraid to Talk About It
By Jon Entine
Public Affairs, 387 pages, $25

Asians are 57 percent of the world's population but are virtually invisible on the world stage of running, soccer, and basketball. The smallest of the world's major races, people of sub-Saharan African ancestry, are about 12 percent of the world's 6 billion population, yet their dominance of some sports is staggering. Blacks are 13 percent of the U.S. population but are: 80 percent of professional basketball players, 65 percent of professional football players, one-third of professional baseball players, and 70 percent of women's professional basketball players.

No one questions the accuracy of statistics showing black dominance in many sports, but in our modern world of political correctness one mentions them at his peril; speculation about the causes is out of the question altogether. In comes Jon Entine making waves with his new book, *Taboo*. Entine is an Emmy-winning producer, formerly with NBC and ABC News, and co-author with Tom Brokaw of the award-winning documentary *Black Athletes: Fact & Fiction*. Jon Entine chances being tarred and feathered as a racist by not only cataloging statistics of black sports dominance but, what's even more grievous, hazarding an explanation.

In our politically correct world, everybody is equal. Any inequalities in performance, particularly as they are associated with race or sex, are to be explained by environmental factors such as poverty and discrimination. Genetic explanations are off-limits in cases of race and sex but acceptable, even demanded, in explaining homosexuality.

Entine's first suggestion that genetics might explain black sports excellence comes when he writes, "All of the thirty-two finalists in the last four Olympic men's 100-meter races are of West African descent." The probability of such an outcome by chance is 0.0000000000 0000000000000000000000001 percent.

Suggesting that genetics might explain some of the racial differences in sports goes up against deeply entrenched received wisdom. University of Texas sociologist John Hoberman dismisses genetic theories of black sports excellence as "Euro-American white racialist thinking…quasi-scientific…irresponsible …sensational …scientifically invalid." Sociologist Laurel Davis, professor at Springfield College, contends that "reports that purport to show black genetic advantages in sports [are] built upon racist assumptions" and reinforce "white power structures."

Despite the quest for political correctness, considerable physiological and anthropometric evidence suggests that blacks systematically differ from whites. Blacks of West African ancestry have smaller chest cavities, greater body density, heavier bone mass, longer arm span, less subcutaneous fat on arms and legs, faster patellar tendon reflex, a higher percentage of fast-twitch muscles, more anaerobic enzymes (which can translate into more explosive energy), and higher levels of plasma testosterone. Entine says, "Relative advantage in these physiological and biomechanical characteristics are a gold mine for athletes who compete in such anaerobic activities as football, basketball, and sprinting, sports in which West African blacks (and their American progeny) clearly excel."

Some of these same characteristics spell disaster for blacks who have aspirations to be, for instance, Olympic–class swimmers. Entine writes, "No African American has ever qualified for the U.S. Olympic swim or dive team. Indeed, despite a number of special programs and considerable funding that have attracted thousands of aspiring black Olympians, there were only seven blacks who could even qualify to compete against the 455 swimmers at the 1996 Olympic trials…. In colloquial terms, blacks are considered sinkers."

Entine examines the "environmentalist case against innate black superiority in sports." Physiologist Owen Andersen insists that "Elite runners have worked unbelievably hard, and their extreme physical travail and motivation—not their genes—have played the key roles in getting them to the front of the pack." Professor Harry Edwards explains, "Discrimination curtails black access to alternative high-prestige occupations." Other non-genetic explanations, not suggested in *Taboo*, might be that sports like basketball, football, and baseball can be learned without much money, while not much progress can be made in tennis, golf, and swimming without money and teachers early on.

Many find the environmentalist explanation of black sports superiority far more

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acceptable, particularly in light of eugenic arguments that have questioned black intelligence and morals and served as justification for all manner of restrictions, including those on intermarriage, as means to preserve the white race. *Taboo* has a lively discussion of this era in a chapter called "American Eugenics." Many respectable scientists contributed to eugenics. It is a testament to earlier acceptance of their arguments that the founder of the NAACP, W. E. B. DuBois, said, "The mass of significant Negroes, particularly in the South, still breed carelessly and disastrously, with the result that the increase among ignorant Negroes, even more than among whites, is [in] that portion of the population least intelligent and fit, and least able to rear children properly."

Taboo is not all controversy. Entine provides us with many interesting vignettes of the struggle blacks made to break the color line. He writes carefully on a very touchy topic, and made me a bit more optimistic that some decent people have the courage to broach important questions of genetics and race. If decent people don't discuss this subject, we concede the turf to black and white racists.

Walter E. Williams is John M. Olin professor and chairman of the department of economics at George Mason University.

MODEL "A" FORD

By Brock Yates

Print the Legend
By Scott Eyman
Simon & Schuster, 592 pages, $40

Think of John Ford in black and white. While many of his greatest pictures, including *The Searchers* and *The Quiet Man*, were shot in color, it is the nuanced, monochromatic composition of such masterpieces as *The Grapes of Wrath, Stagecoach, How Green Was My Valley*, and *My Darling Clementine* that stand as Ford's trademarks. As the widely respected critic and biographer Scott Eyman notes in his detailed and incisive chronicle of Ford's life, *Print the Legend*, the fabled director was distrustful of color. "It's much easier than black and white for a cameraman," he said. "It's a cinch to work in, if you've got an eye at all for color and composition. But black and white is pretty tough. You've got to know your job and be very careful to lay your shadows properly and get the perspective right. There are certain pictures, like *The Quiet Man*, that call for color—not the blatant kind—but a soft, misty color. For a good dramatic story, though, I much prefer to work in black and white; you'll probably say I'm old fashioned, but black and white is real photography."

Over his 50-year career, which began in the silent era as a prop man working with his older brother Frank, an aspiring actor, Ford directed 140 films and won six Oscars. While he is best remembered for his wonderfully expansive yet intensely personal Westerns, beginning with *Stagecoach* (1939) and ending with *Cheyenne Autumn* (1964)—most of which starred his friend, compatriot, and occasional whipping boy John Wayne—Ford's body of work ranged from the Elizabethan era (*Mary of Scotland*, which included a little-known love affair with its star, Katherine Hepburn) to powerful chronicles of World War II like *They Were Expendable, Mr. Roberts*, and his extraordinary documentary, *The Battle of Midway*.

Ford's empathy for the common man generated explosive energy in such gritty epics as *The Grapes of Wrath, How Green Was My Valley, Tobacco Road*, and *Young Mr. Lincoln*. These films in particular set him apart from the slick hacks who dominated Hollywood during the '30s and'40s.

But the great man's legend was based as much on his personal life as on his work. As much an actor as the hapless souls he dragooned and tongue-lashed during shootings, Ford had a flair for the dramatic equal to anyone. A herculean party man, Ford surrounded himself with a retinue of hard-living pals, including favorite actors from his informal stock company like Wayne, Ward Bond, and Harry Carey Jr. He told some whoppers and erected a biography of fact and fable for himself that biographer Eyman, with a clear eye and no fixed agenda, penetrates with unerring accuracy.

Ford claimed to have been born on February 1, 1895, in Cape Elizabeth, Maine, as Sean Aloysius O'Fearn. In fact, Eyman's search of the town's birth records revealed, Ford was born a year earlier and named John Martin Feeney. "Jack" Ford, as he was to be known to friends for the rest of his life, also claimed to have worked as a cowboy (doubtful: he was a dreadful rider) and reported he had forayed with Pancho Villa—a story surely stolen from fellow director Raoul Walsh.

"Such flights of fancy are hardly grievous character flaws," observes Eyman, perhaps with a dollop of excessive charity. "Ford was, after all, a professional story teller." He matured in the wooly, pre-television era of the teens, '20s, and '30s, when titanic adventurers like Ernest Hemingway and Teddy Roosevelt fascinated the populace, trailing behind them as they did lurid tales of hyperbolic personal derring-do.

Irascible, choleric, and stubborn to a fault, Ford fostered his public image as a hard-knuckled rebel working among a rabble of Hollywood flunkies and yes-men. Much of this was theatrical posturing intended to conceal a sensitive soul that resided inside the blustery exterior. This had to be the case, because no one as seemingly boorish and occasionally vicious as the public Ford could have harbored the dimensional genius necessary to compose, direct, and cut the classics that marked his career.

To be sure, not all critics celebrate the master. David Thomson, the brilliant observer of motion pictures, has defined the Ford philosophy as "a rambling apologia for unthinking violence later disguised by the sham legends of old men fuddled by drink and glory." Yet Thomson, in the 1994 edition of his superb *A Biographical Dictionary of American Film*, celebrated *The Searchers* as a "riveting, tragic, and complex experience, a movie in which Ford gives up many of his false certainties and [offers] a story filled with disturbing, half-buried thoughts of race and failure. On the strength of that one film I would love to read a thorough life of Ford."

Thanks to Scott Eyman, Thomson's wish has been fulfilled.

Brock Yates' most recent book is Outlaw Machine: Harley-Davidson and the Search for the American Soul.

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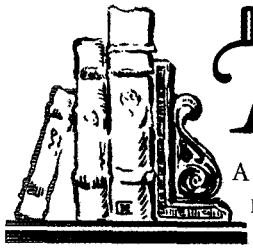

off The Shelf

A REGULAR REVIEW OF CLASSIC, OVER-LOOKED, NEWLY RELEVANT, OR OTHERWISE DESERVING OLDER BOOKS

MIND OUR OWN BUSINESS

By Aaron Steelman

A Foreign Policy for Americans
By Robert A. Taft
Doubleday, 1951

It's easy to understand why most Americans paid little attention to the war in the Balkans. In the first place, nine out of ten people probably couldn't pick out Kosovo on a map. Second, no U.S. soldiers were killed in the line of fire. But this doesn't mean that the NATO-led intervention wasn't important. It surely was.

The conflict set at least one important precedent: That it's perfectly reasonable to send American troops into harm's way for "humanitarian" reasons alone. And it bolstered another trend that has been gaining ground for years: The President doesn't need to get approval from Congress before he wages war; he just needs to "consult" with Capitol Hill.

Opponents of American intervention found these developments troubling, but few expressed their reservations with power or eloquence. When congressional critics appeared on television they had almost as much trouble explaining why they were against the war as Madeleine Albright and Sandy Berger had explaining why they were for it. These critics needed a guidebook. They could have benefited from looking at *A Foreign Policy for Americans*, by former senator and presidential aspirant Robert A. Taft.

Though it was originally published in 1951, the book addresses many of the issues confronting lawmakers today. Taft starts out by posing a very simple and important question, one that isn't asked often nowadays: What is the "real purpose and object" of America's foreign policy? His answer is clear: "No foreign policy can be justified except a policy devoted without reservation or diversion to the protection of the liberty of the American people, with war only as the last resort and only to preserve that liberty."

Such a declaration gets us away from making foreign policy decisions on an ad hoc basis, and it answers muddy questions. For example: Why intervene in the Balkans but not in Rwanda? Using Taft's statement as a guide, the United States wouldn't act in either case. The reason, of course, is that while overseas human-rights violations sadden most Americans, they don't pose a threat to our security.

"We have no primary interest as a national policy to improve conditions or material welfare in other parts of the world or to change other forms of government. Certainly we should not engage in war to achieve such purposes," Taft wrote. Similarly, in a 1943 speech before the American Bar Association, which is reprinted in part in *A Foreign Policy for Americans*, Taft argued: "[F]orce should not be called for against any nation because of any internal domestic policy, except rearmament in excess of a quota imposed or agreed to. Interference in domestic policies, even such vital matters as tariffs or the treatment of minorities, would be more likely to make war than prevent it." Indeed, by making war on Serbia, NATO actually made things worse for many of Kosovo's ethnic Albanians. And now that the Kosovo Liberation Army has the upper hand in many areas, it, too, is meting out brutal punishment against defenseless people. But this time Serbs are the victims.

Bill Clinton wasn't the first president to claim that he could wage war without congressional approval. In the early 1950's, Harry Truman argued that he could send troops to Korea without the say-so of Congress. This angered Taft. He wrote: "I do not think that the American people have ever faced a more serious constitutional issue or one which in the end may present a greater threat to their freedom."

To Taft, the issue was two-fold. First, if you give the President exclusive decision-making authority in foreign affairs, war becomes more likely. "History shows that when the people have the opportunity to speak [through the actions of Congress] they as a rule decide for peace if possible. It shows that arbitrary rulers are more inclined to favor war than are the people at any time," he wrote. Second, once the president takes the country to war, the effects are felt not only abroad, but also at home where Congress has responsibilities.

During wars, the federal government has claimed emergency powers that would have otherwise been unthinkable. Wars have been an excuse for suppressing civil liberties on a massive scale, establishing wage and price controls, and sharply hiking taxes. When the emergencies eventually end, many of the emergency measures do not. "War not only produces pitiful human suffering and utter destruction of many things worth-while, but it is almost as disastrous for the victor as for the vanquished," Taft warned.

Taft wasn't a pure non-interventionist. "He did not oppose *all* American commitments abroad, *all* alliances with other nations, or the extension of *all* American power beyond the United States," notes historian Henry Berger. But Taft believed it was sheer hubris to think that the United States could recreate the world in its own image. He understood there were limits to what America could, and should, do overseas. Most political leaders today lack such humility.

Aaron Steelman is a graduate student in the social sciences at the University of Chicago.

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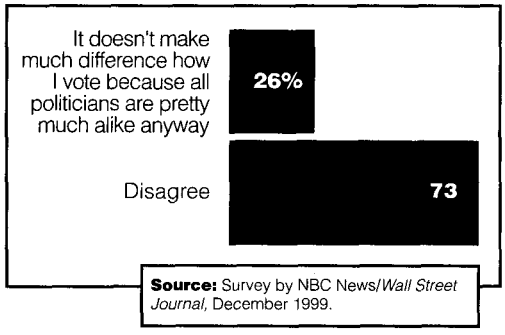
Opinion Pulse

EDITED BY KARLYN BOWMAN

ELECTION 2000

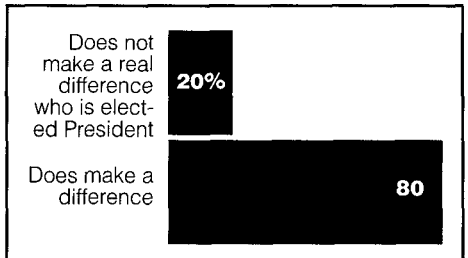
Although we hear many complaints about our elections, large majorities of Americans believe their votes count and that it makes a difference who is elected President. This year more Americans believe that there is a candidate running for President who would make a good President than gave that response in 1996 or 1992. People are feeling better off, but many are troubled by the nation's moral climate. Majorities want the next president to continue Clinton's policies. Of the rest, more want change in a conservative than in a liberal direction.

Question: Do you...?

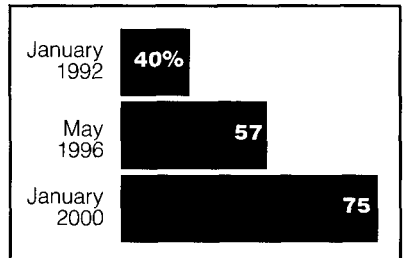


Source: Survey by NBC News/*Wall Street Journal*, December 1999.

Question: Next we have some questions about the 2000 Presidential campaign

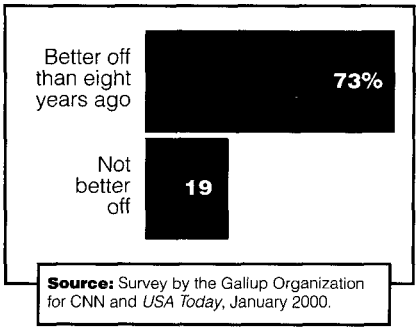


Question: There is a candidate running this year who would make a good President



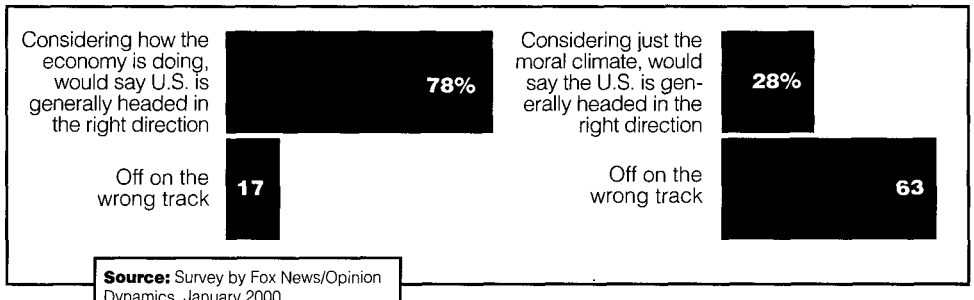
Source: Surveys by the Gallup Organization for CNN and *USA Today*, latest that of January 2000.

Question: Are you...?



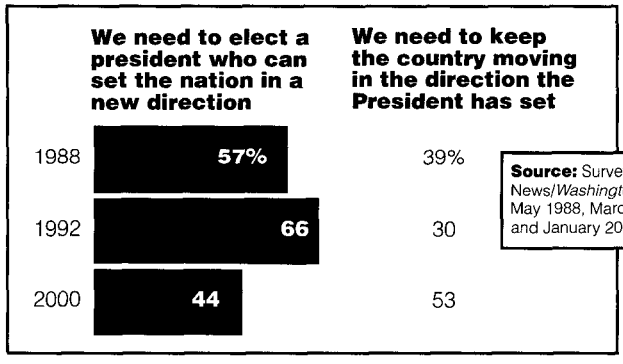
Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization for CNN and *USA Today*, January 2000.

Question: Would you say...?



Source: Survey by Fox News/Opinion Dynamics, January 2000.

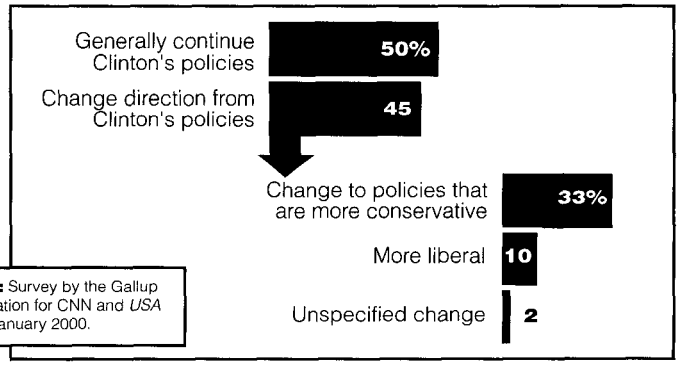
Question: Which of these two statements comes closest to your own views...?



Source: Surveys by ABC News/*Washington Post*, May 1988, March 1992, and January 2000.

Question: Would you like to see the next President...

Question: What kind of change would you like to see the next President...?



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization for CNN and *USA Today*, January 2000.

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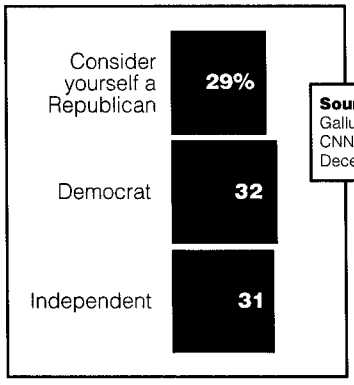
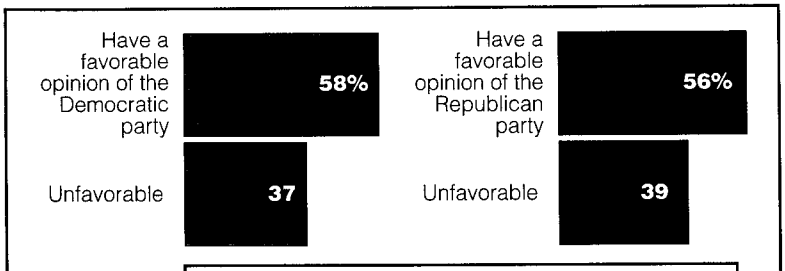
The country is pretty evenly divided among Democrats, Republicans, and Independents these days. Majorities hold favorable opinions of the two major parties. Most Americans consider themselves moderates, and feel that Al Gore, George W. Bush, and John McCain are, too. At this early stage of the campaign, leadership skills and vision trump issues as important vote considerations. Sound judgment in a crisis is absolutely essential in a president as are high ethical standards and compassion. Experience in Washington ranks low.

Question: In politics, as of today, do you...?



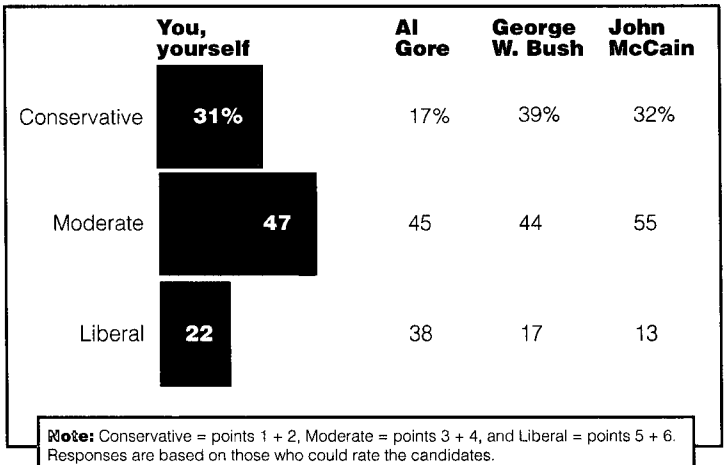
Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization for CNN and *USA Today*, December 1999.

Question: Please tell me whether you...?



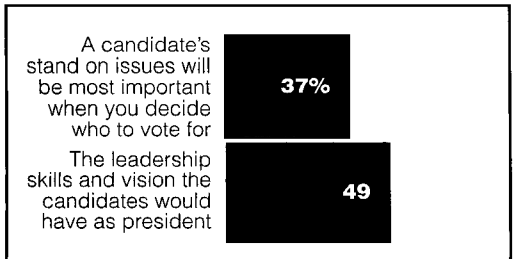
Note: A December 1999 NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll found that 23 percent had a favorable opinion of the Reform party, and 40 percent an unfavorable opinion.
Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization for CNN and *USA Today*, January 2000.

Question: If "6" represents someone who is very liberal in politics and "1" represents someone who is very conservative, where on this scale would you rate...?



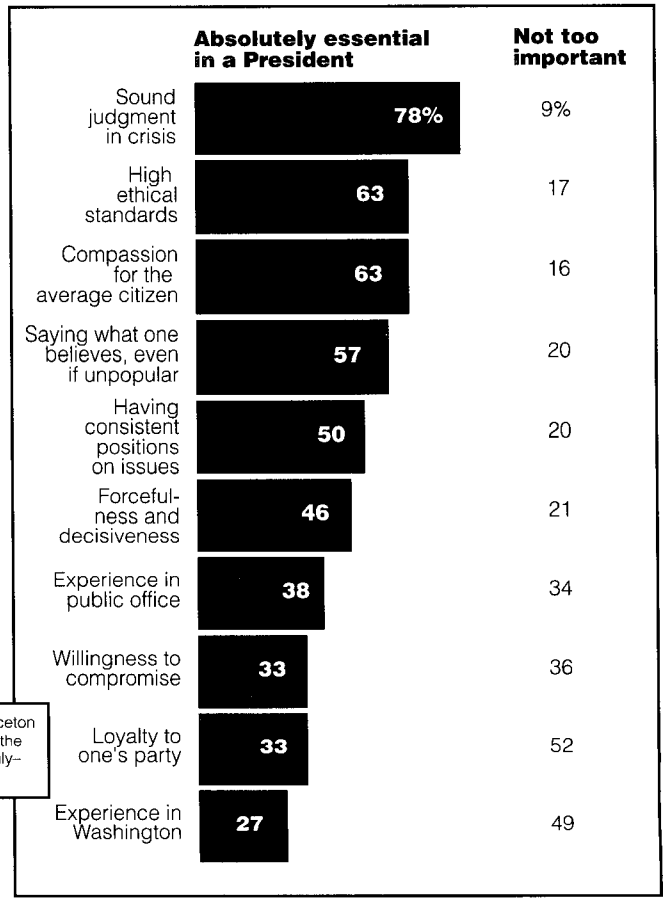
Note: Conservative = points 1 + 2, Moderate = points 3 + 4, and Liberal = points 5 + 6. Responses are based on those who could rate the candidates.
Source: Survey by Princeton Survey Research Associates for the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, January 2000.

Question: Which of the following do you think will be most important...?



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization for CNN and *USA Today*, January 2000.

Question: First, I'm going to read you a list of personal characteristics or qualities. If "5" represents an absolutely essential quality in a President, and "1" a quality that is not too important, where on this scale ...?



Source: Survey by Princeton Research Associates for the Pew Research Center, July–September 1999.

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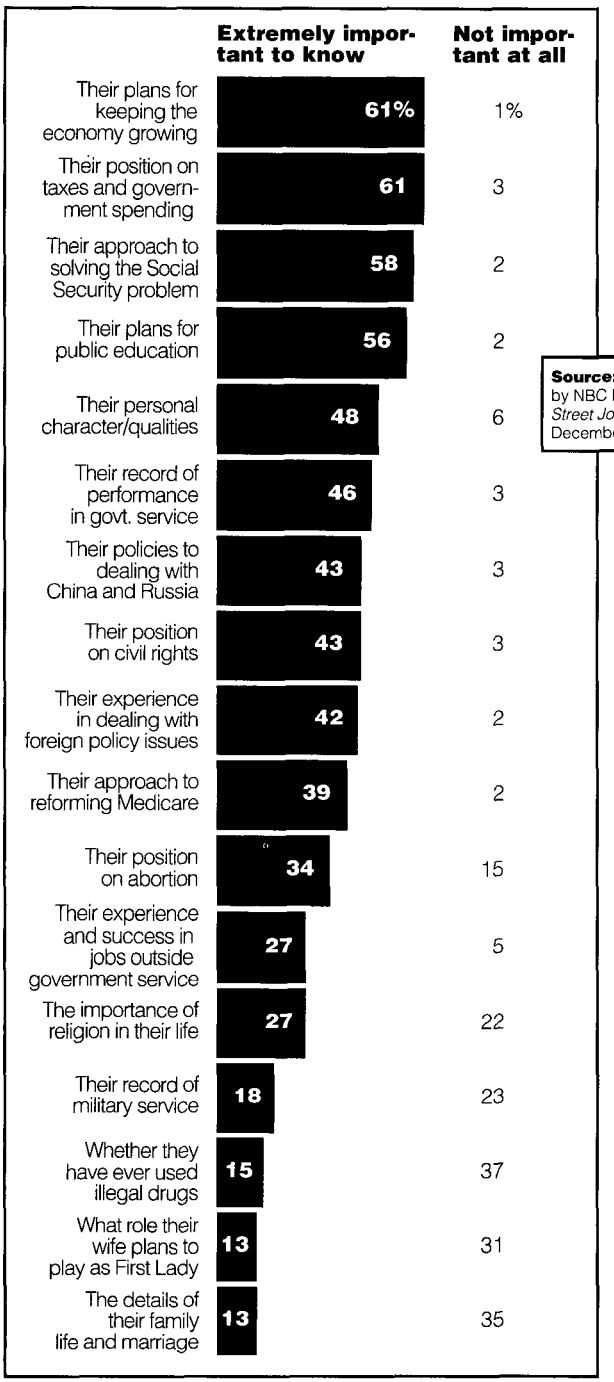
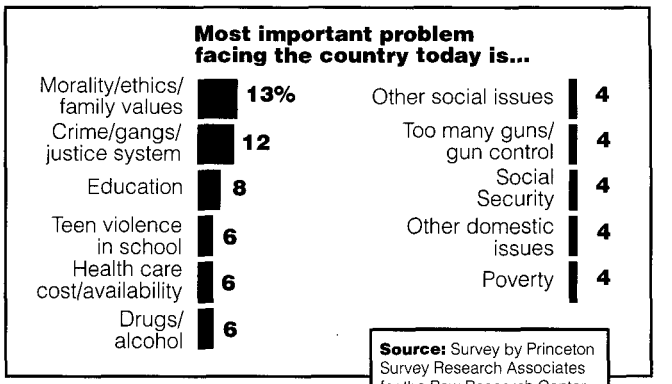
This page displays three different ways pollsters ask about issues. When given a list of different concerns, slightly more than six in ten say it is extremely important to know a candidate's positions on pocketbook issues such as economic growth and taxes and spending. Social security and education are also important. When people are asked to name in their own words the most important problem facing the country, morality and crime come up on top. As the chart on the bottom right shows, self-identified Democrats and Republicans differ on the relative importance of some issues.

Question: In the context of your making a decision to vote for one candidate or the other, please tell me ...?



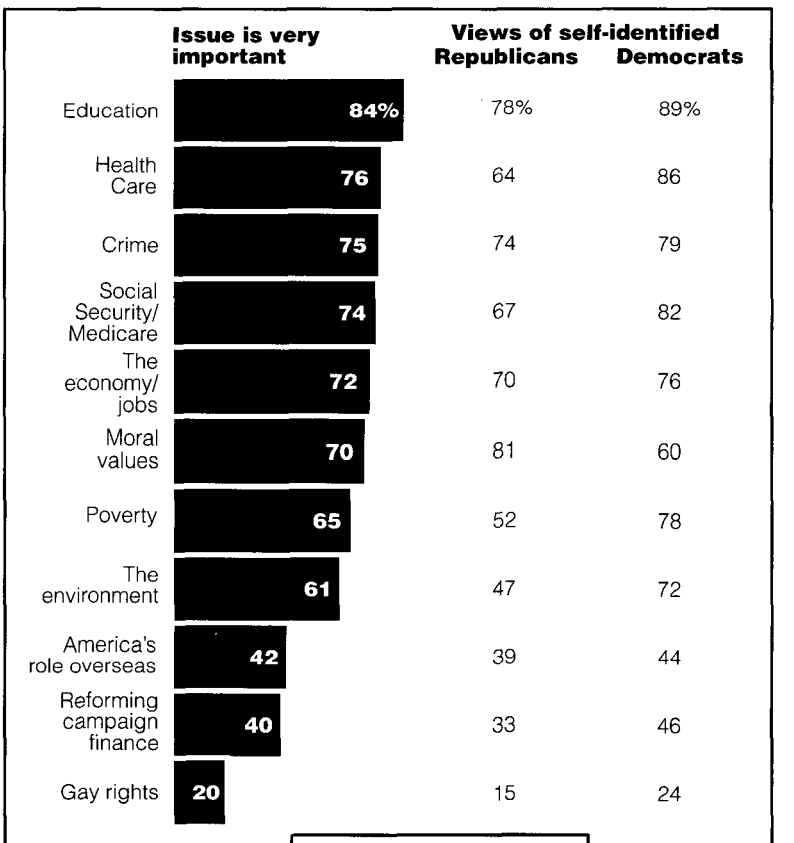
Source: Survey by NBC News/*Wall Street Journal*, December 1999.

Question: What do you think...?



Source: Survey by Princeton Survey Research Associates for the Pew Research Center, July–September 1999.

Question: Next, please tell me how important each of the following issues are to you in deciding which presidential candidate to support...?



Source: Survey by Princeton Survey Research Associates for *Newsweek*, January 2000.

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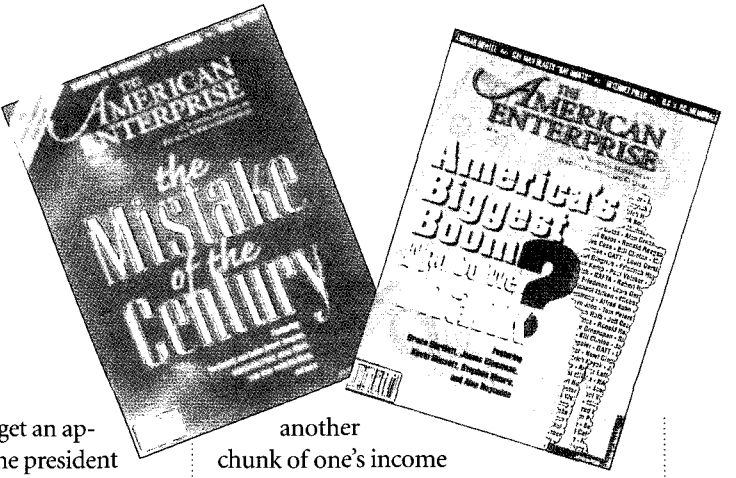
the Mail



Joel Kotkin captures a few reasons that big, bureaucratic corporations are slipping—or totally collapsing ("The Rise and Fall of the Giant Corporation," January/February). But he misses one of the most important changes in twentieth-century business.

Beginning in the 1840s, a managerial revolution in American business occurred as professional managers took control of owner-dominated firms. These managers brought their own expertise but also an ability to sift through information, passing it upwards to stockholders or owners and downward to employees as required.

But with today's computer revolution, virtually any employee can access critical company information without the help of managers. Likewise, top-level executives no longer need lower-level "filters" to screen them from mundane information. They can decide for themselves if e-mails or memos are important. The result: a massive laying off of mid-level managers—largely misunderstood as a "scaling down," when instead it is a fundamental reordering of American business.

Contrast this with government or other large bureaucracies not subject to market pressures; for example, the school where I teach, which has dramatically increased the number of middle and upper managers in the years I've been here. In 1985, we had one provost. Today, we have a provost and three assistant provosts, plus innumerable directors and heads of departments that perform mysterious, unnamed functions.

Kotkin mentions Nucor. While researching the company for a book, I was able to get the head of Nucor on the phone, after going through only one secretary, in less than 5 minutes. (At that time, Nucor had a manager-to-plant ratio of below one.) But I could not get an appointment to meet with the president of my own university for months!

The collapse of the value added by middle managers marks the end of what Harvard business historian Alfred Chandler called the "visible hand." But the oppressiveness of government regulations has also played a role in ending the "visible hand." Several years ago I formed a corporation to handle all my outside writing projects. I had to dissolve this corporation when I found that even though I had no employees, I still had to pay various fees and file various forms with the state of Ohio stating that, indeed, I had no employees and thus paid them no wages!

This is only one example of how, once you grow beyond a handful of employees, a business becomes fair game for bureaucrats. Small is beautiful if for no other reason than to keep you out of Uncle Sam's (and your state's) sights.

Larry Schweikart
University of Dayton

In his excellent FORWARD OBSERVER (January/February) James Glassman erroneously asserts that American families don't save enough, and thus do not accumulate enough wealth. In fact, Americans save almost 15 percent of their gross wages through Social Security payroll taxes that they and their employers pay. Factoring this in, the American savings rate is one of the world's highest.

Unfortunately, the criminally negligent use of this money by the federal government in a retirement system that provides no return on investment creates the largest obstacle to accumulating wealth in this country; namely, having to save another chunk of one's income for retirement in addition to Social Security taxes.

Michael Der Manouel
Fresno, California

Philip Langdon claims "small-school students do better than big-school students in almost every way" ("The School Consolidation Plague," January/February). He cites Nancy Coleman, the "brainy daughter of a plumber" who "played a key role…in the campaign against the Supreme Court nomination of Robert Bork."

How proud Mr. Langdon seems of her. Has this brainy girl from a small school served our country in any other notable activities? Let's hope not.

Donna Spaulding
Irvington, Virginia

If proponents of the public education monopoly are correct that most of the problems in education today are due to a high student/teacher ratio, then there are only two realistic options: We can continue to pack students into larger and larger public schools, a policy Philip Langdon rightly warns against, or we can increase the number of schools students can attend.

Short of an initiative greater than the Interstate Highway System, giving parents vouchers to send their children to private schools is the only way to solve the problem of overcrowded schools. Of course, as some parents transfer their children out of public schools and into private ones, there will be smaller classes for students still in public schools.

Michael Barkley
The Acton Institute

The American Enterprise welcomes your comments. Send to "The Mail," The American Enterprise, 1150 17th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. Or fax to (202) 862-5867. Or e-mail TheAmericanEnterprise@compuserve.com. Please include your address and phone number. Published letters may be edited for length and clarity.

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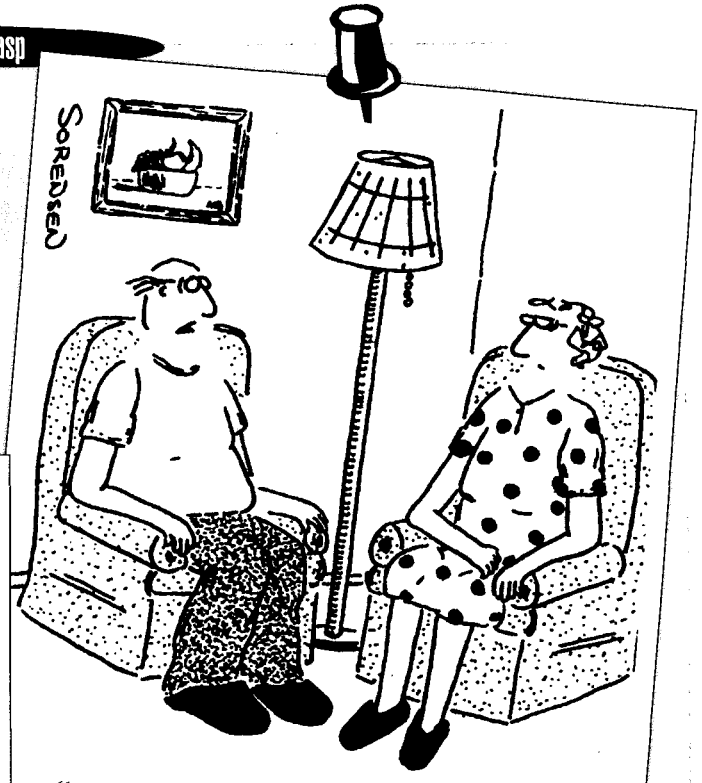
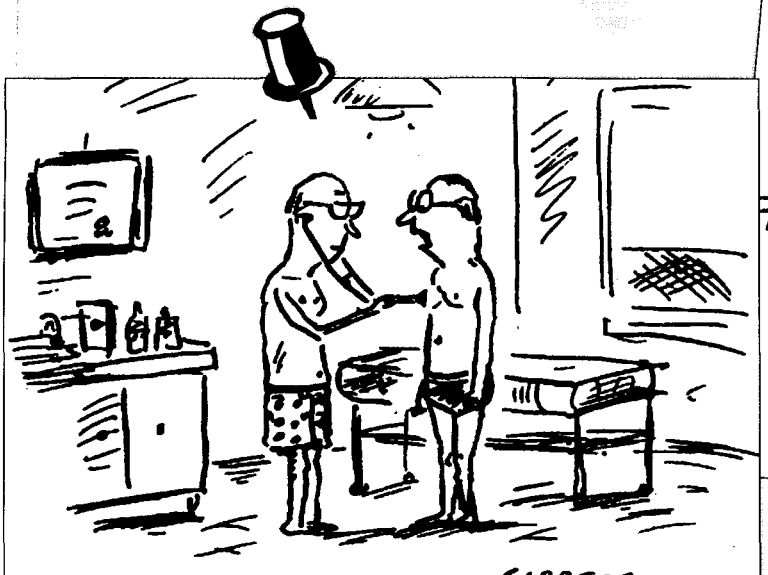
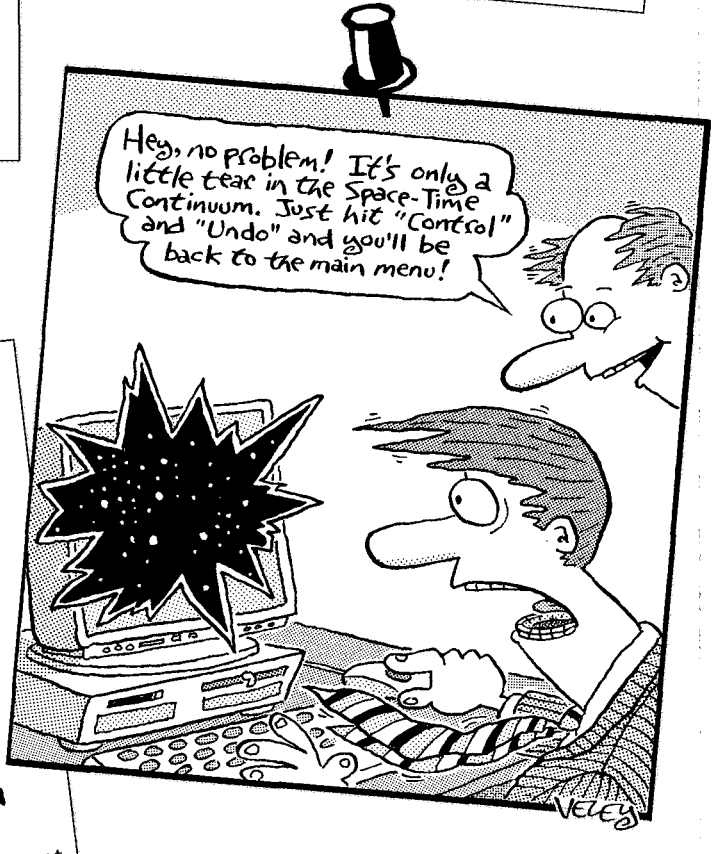


"Time's up. I'm through listening"



"As a patient, I must say I find this new approach of yours very refreshing."



"I'm going to order a broiled skinless chicken breast, but I want you to bring me lasagna and garlic bread by mistake."

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"Public Art Can Serve No Higher Purpose Than To Reveal And Embody The Nobility of the Human Spirit"
—Frederick Hart

s Traditional
rt Experiencing
A Renaissance?

ink Tank, the weekly PBS ogram on ideas and policy, mined this question in two t programs.

struck a resonant chord. We ceived more mail regarding our ogram on sculptor Frederick Hart an from any previous show. (Prior ecord holder program: Milton and Rose Friedman.) Then our Norman Rockwell program, which aired as he widely acclaimed Rockwell ouring exhibit opened, broke our ecord set by Hart!

ffice it say, many Americans have g problem with much of modern t. They seek the nobility that Hart poke of.

We think this question of a "re-traditionalization" within American art—across the board—deserves ther examination. We are in con-rsations with PBS now and ect a time slot and partial fund-for a prime time special to air t year.

e will need underwriting help from rporations and foundations. Please contact:

Doug Anderson 202-862-4882
ug.anderson@nrmedia.com)

Ben Wattenberg 202-862-5908
wattenberg @aei.org)

ThinkTANK viewers say "Yes"

Rockwell was truly an American art form....something of our very own.
Brenda Clark

I thoroughly enjoyed your interview with Frederick Hart. His work is fabulous. Any chance of encouraging "the powers that be" to do an extended program on the artist and his work?
Sandy Boyes

The fact that many museum board of directors turned a cold shoulder at the idea of having the Norman Rockwell exhibit stand in their institutions shows just how much these so-called 'art experts' are out of touch with what the majority of Americans are thinking. And that is a crime.
Steve Kastenbaum

Frederick Hart should be declared a national treasure. That he has not received critical acclaim for his magnificent works is a disgrace! American art has lost it's way by focusing on freedom of expression and marketing success. Mr. Hart's untimely passing is a sad loss to American art. Keep up the good work in choosing and exploring the subjects for your programs.
Michael Navatta

Hart presented ideas that are shared by most Americans but shunned by the media and the artistic community. I thank you for this enlightening half-hour.
Allen Roth

I am not an expert on art by any stretch of the imagination, but I felt compelled to express my views on Rockwell's art because I believe he was a very important vehicle for capturing scenes from the 20th century—I think he was an excellent artist.
Frances Young

Think TANK
With BEN WATTENBERG

Funding for Think Tank is provided by the John M. Olin Foundation, the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation and the Smith Richardson Foundation.

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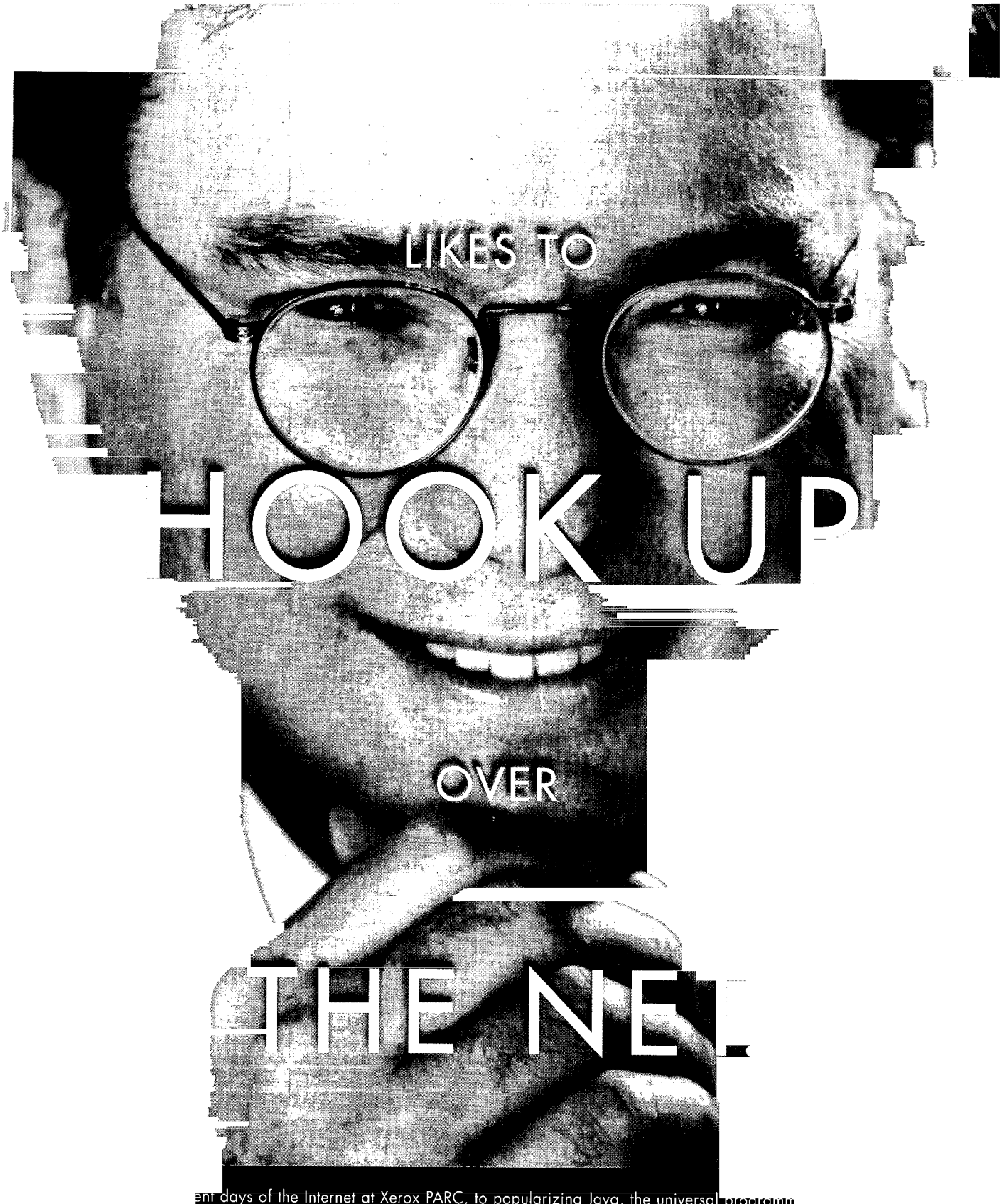

ent days of the Internet at Xerox PARC, to popularizing Java, the universal programm
dt has been networking's driving force. So when he joined Novell as CEO, he brazen
g the top networking software in the industry. That got computers and people talking.
ntrepreneurs like Eric Schmidt find a kindred spirit in Forbes. No wonder he's been reading it since

Forbes
CAPITALIST TOOL

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